

LIVING TO BEAT HELL



DR. KENNETH A. CARLSON

0000#11372426

LIVING TO BEAT HELL

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KENNY CARLSON PUBLICATIONS
Glendale, California

1984

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER 83-73601
ISBN 0-87062-156-4

Produced under the direction of
The Arthur H. Clark Co.
Glendale, CA

Typesetting by Prosperity Press
Glendale, CA

To
ALMA ROSE CARLSON

and in affectionate memory of

DR. ROY L. SMITH

described by Dr. Carlson as "My beloved friend and
'Father in the Gospel' and an unending source of
inspiration to all who knew him as a great Methodist
preacher, pastor, and writer."

Contents

Foreword	9
Preface	11
Introduction	13
I. LIVING IN THE ALTITUDE OF YOUR ATTITUDE	
This chapter confronts life's daily anxieties and offers practical suggestions to get on top of them.	
Getting Hold of Your Worries	19
Dealing With Discouragement	26
Getting on Top of Your Fears	32
Overcoming Sorrow	39
II. FINDING THE REALITY OF GOD	
This chapter deals with the doubts that challenge faith. The belief structure of multitudes of people has been weakened or destroyed. It is normal to doubt, for out of this comes growth.	
How to Dissolve Your Doubts	49
Finding God in the Universe	57
III. LIVING TO BE YOUR BEST	
This chapter strikes a positive, optimistic note and offers suggestions on how to attain our potential good and maintain it.	
A Blueprint for Living	67
Three Steps to Real Living	73
Putting on a Better You	79
Being Born Four Times	87
Your Shortest Biography	93
Give Me a Tomorrow	100
IV. LOOKING AT JESUS THROUGH CONTEMPORARY EYES	
In a world that tends to lose sight of the Man who altered the course of history, Dr. Carlson puts Him back in perspective by looking at what facts we know about Him and what His words and actions tell us about Him.	
What Strange Man Is This?	109
Ways in Which Christ Was Different	116

V. MODERN MAN AND THE BIBLE

Dr. Carlson takes a look at a familiar story and some familiar words from the Bible and brings them up-to-date.

Unlocking Your Inner Door to Great Living 125

How the Meek Inherit the Earth 132

Don't You Believe It 138

VI. SUFFERING AND HEALING

In this chapter the author looks at different types of suffering and where it fits into our lives, and at the reality of and the misrepresentation of miracle cures. The chapter ends with the story of his own miraculous healing after being close to death.

Why Do Good Folks Suffer? 147

What About Miracle Cures? 154

The Miracle of Being You 162

VII. THE REALITY OF DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION

Dr. Carlson analyzes the evolution of man's belief in soul and afterlife. He then brings what we know about death up-to-date. God's ultimate answer to death is life — and resurrection.

God's Answer to Death 171

When We Die — What Next? 179

VIII. FORTY-THREE YEARS IN THE MINISTRY

The author offers an interesting look at the forming of his own personal philosophy over four decades in the ministry.

How the Years Have Changed My Mind 191

IX. WHERE TO, PLEASE? 201

This final chapter of the book discusses truth and being genuine. It helps the reader to decide which way their life is moving and will leave one with a better understanding of themselves.

About Kenny Carlson 208

ILLUSTRATIONS

A gallery of photos from the Carlson family album follows Chapter VI between pages 162 and 163.

Foreword

Dr. Kenneth A. Carlson, one of the greatest American preachers, thrilled large congregations by his sermons. He was also extraordinarily popular as a speaker at all types of secular gatherings and on radio and TV.

“Kenny” Carlson, my longtime friend, had the rare gift of speaking winsomely and helpfully to people’s needs. He was able to lift a person from discouragement to hope and send him on his way with courage and joy.

In this volume prepared by his son, Richard A. Carlson, the great preacher, the great friend of all of us, will continue to bless the lives of many through the years.

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

GIVE ME TOMORROW

There is a miracle in you
Your touch of light comes shining through
Yours is a gift for those that dream
It's a love that will never leave

A voice of reason in the night
A journey through the inner light
A love to reach beyond the stars
That's how special that you are

Now I know my life has meaning
So much bigger than myself
And I know there is a future
You give me the help

You give me tomorrow with hope in your eyes
I lost all my sorrow when you showed me the sky
You give me tomorrow there's no room for doubt
You lit the flame that will never go out

Copyright 1982, Richard A. Carlson
(from a song written and dedicated to his father.)

Preface

When my dad passed away in 1981, I had the strong feeling that a collection of his sermons would be an enduring memorial to his ministry. I had no idea I was undertaking a project that would turn into one of the most rewarding and satisfying experiences of my life. Nor did I realize I was embarking upon a beloved task that would lead me through over two years of dedication. As this project evolved into manuscript form, it became clear to me that the messages Kenny Carlson delivered each Sunday fit into several common areas of emphasis which have now become the chapters in this book. Most of all he challenged us to live to our potential as human beings, and to approach life with a positive outlook and underlying faith. It is my belief that the challenge and comfort of his words are as important and relevant today as when they were written — if not more so.

What I hope to have accomplished with this book is to provide a living testament to the life and ministry of Dr. Kenneth A. Carlson. I sincerely hope it will be a source of comfort, inspiration, and a guide for helping people to not only survive this daily process we call life, but to live it triumphantly. That is how Kenny Carlson lived.

I must express gratitude to the following people:

I am indebted beyond words to my mother, Rose Carlson, the Rose of Texas, the most truly gentle and loving person I have ever known; whose faith in this project underlined the strength I had to complete it.

My deepest gratitude goes to Juanita Manning, my dad's

assistant for 17 years, whose painstaking hours of work, inspiration, and dedication made my work so much easier and without whose assistance this book would never have been completed.

A special thanks goes to:

Don Galleher, whose involvement was absolutely necessary in this work—for his encouragement and for making me laugh.

Clifford C. Cate, for helping to plant the mental seed that matured into this book.

Bernie Larson, for having recorded Kenny Carlson's sermons in the first place, and for making all of his tapes available to me in my research.

My family, who were, as always, supportive and who give meaning to my life: my brother, Wesley K. Carlson; my sister and her husband, Marsha and David Carthey, and their children Sarah and Scott; Ed and Beulah Carthey; and a special thanks to my cousin Joy and her husband, Larry Peterman, for their continued interest.

RICK CARLSON

Introduction

The following introduction was written by Dr. Carlson at a time when he was under contract to Prentice Hall Publishing Company. In planning a manuscript for that company, he selected the title *Living to Beat Hell*. Unfortunately, a demanding schedule prevented him from ever finishing that book, but the title remained one he intended to use should a book ever be completed. (It is to be noted that this book is in no way connected with the Prentice Hall Company.)

When we were searching for a title for this book, my good friend, Wilbur Eastman, Vice President and General Manager of Prentice Hall, said, "Why not call it *Living to Beat Hell*?"

My initial reaction was one of mild shock, for I wondered what the members of my congregation would think of a title like that. But the more I thought of it, the more I was impressed with the idea that perhaps this is what each of us is trying to do — live to beat hell. No, not hell in the sense of fire and brimstone, but the hell we experience and endure when life gets out of kilter.

This hell wears many faces: selfishness, fear, worry, depression, physical and mental illness, grief, despair, ad infinitum. In the early days of my ministry a fine old gentleman said to me, "You must learn to live on top of what happens to you, or it will crush you." This is true, but doing it is more difficult than scaling Mt. Everest.

During my college years I traveled extensively one summer throughout the United States as a hobo, in the interest of securing information concerning the problems of transient youth. One afternoon, while riding atop a box car crossing New Mexico, I got to talking with a chap who was an old timer at this business of hoboing. He said, "Man, 'dis is de life."

I was in Las Vegas to speak for a convention and had occasion to observe the sporting crowds gathered before the gambling tables and slot machines. One fellow hit the jackpot and yelled triumphantly, "This is living!"

A relatively young man sat in my study one evening and recounted the events of an "eat, drink and be merry" sort of existence. He said rather wistfully, "Preacher, I've done some living in my time."

The question is: what do we mean by living? It was said of Jesus, "In Him is life," and the record reveals that the quality of His living was quite different from much of what we call life.

So life means different things to different people. There is a kind of living widespread in our time that leads to physical, mental and spiritual hell. All around us we see people who wind up on the bottom side of themselves, who run into blind alleys, individuals in whose hands life turns sour.

In the attractive Cadet Chapel at West Point are shields of noted American soldiers. One is a shield without a name, bearing only two dates — the date of birth and date of death. This is the shield of Benedict Arnold, a great leader who inspired his men in battle many times when the way was rough. William Grosvenor points out that Arnold's failure lay in the fact that the ideals he believed in had not gotten hold of him deeply enough to stand the real test of life. This, of course, has been the epitaph of many a man.

To merely live is not sufficient. To "eat, drink and be merry" and nothing more can turn out to be hell. For it does not provide the inner being with what it takes to live in tough times. If all a man needed was bread, a modern bakery would hold the key to life. But it has been truly said, "Man does not live by bread alone." If we could endure with laughter alone, a contemporary comedian could be the savior of mankind. However, there are hours when laughter rings hollow, and it requires

something more than a pun to dry the tears of the soul. If power was all that was required to really live, then a space missile could become the 20th century messiah. Still, deep hungers of the human heart would go unmet.

Bread, laughter, power, along with other things, have their rightful place, to be sure, but if one is to live above the torments of the flesh and spirit that spring from our attitudes, behavior and pressures of modern society, there must be something more. The purpose of this book is to explore that something more that can enable us to live to beat hell.

It is my hope that within these pages you will find strength of mind and be stimulated toward creative thinking — that is, thinking that is creative of inner integrity and power, that rises above the hell of confusion and uncertainty.

Jesus did this magnificently. He lived in the midst of turmoil, great tension, conflict and exhausting pressures not unlike our own. Certainly, He was involved with life. But no one of us would say that at the core of His life Jesus was a disturbed person. Even in the midst of the terrifying Crucifixion experience, He stood steady and strong. Bishop A. Raymond Grant has said, “The eyes of Jesus were as pools of peace.”

Much of what is written here is the product of my Glendale pulpit ministry, and I am deeply indebted to a great host of warmhearted, dedicated laymen for encouraging me to share my philosophy and convictions with a wider audience.

A young woman said to me one day, “I own the controlling interest in my mind. I do not surrender to myself.” I like that. This is the essence of what will be said here, that no person ought to ever do to himself what the world itself cannot do. For all the water on the planet cannot sink a ship — unless it gets inside. And when it does — that’s hell.

GETTING HOLD OF YOUR WORRIES

Andre Gide tells of a young girl named Gertrude, who had been blind since birth. She developed a childlike, sentimental picture of the people around her. One day she underwent an operation, her eyes were opened and she could see. Two things immediately impressed her: nature was more beautiful than she had ever imagined, the faces of people were sadder and more burdened than she had expected and lined with anxiety. Gertrude almost wished her sight had not been restored.

Very close to the heart of us we will find anxiety, for we worry about many things. At this point we do not take the teachings of Jesus very seriously. In the 6th Chapter of Matthew He says, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life. . ." And He goes on to talk about the things you ought not to be troubled over. Now, certainly there are times when one must think about food, clothes, the care of the body, but what Jesus is saying here is that one ought not to be so distracted by cares that he loses sight of God, Who is the giver of life and the necessities for living. Mark speaks about the "cares of the world choking the word." Or, to put it another way: worry chokes God out of your life. Here, then, is a plea not to be obsessed by material things at the cost of losing one's sense of balance, his perspective, his soul.

Kenneth Hildebrand tells of a boy watching a plumber remove a pipe. The plumber's face screwed up in effort, and he dripped perspiration. The lad commented, "It's hard work being a plumber, isn't it?" The workman paused and said, "Son, if it were easy everyone would be a plumber." If it were

easy for all of us to live without worry we would certainly do so. It is simple to discuss but more difficult than climbing Mt. Everest to achieve.

I. WORRY IS VERY REAL

Someone has put it this way, "An imaginary worry may be unreal, but a worried imagination is very real." The medical world is today recognizing the physical and emotional havoc wrought by worry and anxiety. What do we mean by worry? Dr. Harry Stack Sullivan says, "It is one of the most terrible experiences which a man undergoes. It is somewhat like a blow on the head. Its symptoms are sleeplessness, headache, feelings of inferiority, irritableness, stomach upset, and deep rooted concerns."

Of course, anxiety is not always negative. It has some positive elements, for it compels us to learn about our fellow man, our environment and ourselves. But at its worst it leads to emotionally induced illnesses. Dr. John Schindler points out that over 50 percent of all the illness in the United States is emotionally induced. What causes it? Anxiety!

A large industrial concern discovered that nine out of ten cases of worker's inefficiency were caused by worry. A life insurance company reports that four out of five nervous breakdowns begin not in actual events, but with worry. Dr. Charles Mayo of the world famous Mayo Clinic, says, "Worry effects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the whole nervous system, and profoundly effects the health. I have never known a man who died from overwork, but many who have died from anxiety."

We need to come back to this word of Jesus, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life" and see if we have become so distracted by cares that God is choked out of our existence.

II. TAKE IT ONE AT A TIME

Scarlet O'Hara, in *Gone With the Wind*, was faced with

many problems. She dealt with them very simply by saying, "I'll think about that tomorrow." There is something to be said for doing that, for it doesn't bog down your todays. But, still, all of us have to live in today and not tomorrow. We have to live in the here and now, for today is a part of eternity. And if we do not live well today we do not live.

Dr. Friedman, of San Francisco, points out that the problem with so many of us is that we think of too many things at once. He calls it polyphasic thinking. He points further to the fact that individuals who let their minds get weighted down with too many things at one time clog up the mental works. And from this stems emotional disorders, ulcers and heart attacks.

It is strange why we worry about so many things we don't need to worry about. So brilliant a man as former President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard worried needlessly about death. William Lyon Phelps tells of visiting with the president and saying he hoped he might do it again and find him equally courteous. Eliot replied, "I should like to have you call but when you come again I may not be here." It developed that because he was 66 years of age he thought he might die at any moment. Had America's greatest educator known at that time he would live for 25 more years, to round out 50 years as the guiding spirit of Harvard and complete a useful life at 92, he would not have taken time to worry about death at 66.

Robert Louis Stevenson suggested that we "sit loose in the saddle of life." I remember a question Bishop James C. Baker used to ask me frequently when I saw him on a Monday or Tuesday, after preaching Sunday, "Did you preach free?" What he meant was—did you preach loose or were you tied up in a knot? My, to be able to be free on the inside, to sit loose—this is what a lot of us need. Let go of all the needless worries that have you tied up in a knot and remember that you'd never notice them from a trotting horse.

Establish the discipline in your life of doing and thinking

about one thing at a time and it will keep you from jumping on your horse and riding madly off in all directions. The Apostle Paul was stoned, beaten, imprisoned, shipwrecked, and persecuted. But this was the man who wrote to the Philippians, "In nothing be anxious." That takes some doing. A step in that direction is to uncrowd the mind by dealing with one thing at a time.

III. REMEMBER UNPREDICTABLE ELEMENTS WORK FOR YOU

We need to remember that in any situation mighty spiritual forces come to our aid if we are wise enough to let them. There is an unpredictable element in all of life's experiences that works in our favor more often than not. I come back to a universal principle which says it is not what a situation does to you that makes the difference, but what you do to the situation. For always we are faced with two choices: pessimism or hopefulness. The optimist always sees some light in the darkness, and the pessimist blows it out.

A nurse and an intern were discussing a patient who had something in his eye. "It's a bad city to get something in your eye in," said the nurse. "Yes," agreed the intern. "But there isn't a better place to get something in your eye out in." That ought to make English majors cringe, but there you have it: the positive versus the negative attitude.

In 1923 a small British freighter, the *Tranvassa*, sank during a hurricane in the Indian Ocean — 1700 miles from the nearest bit of land, Rodriguez Island. Forty-four men clamored into lifeboats, and three members of the crew were seriously ill. Miraculously, they survived until rescued some days later. The Captain wrote, "Apparently the additional effort which the crisis itself demanded effected the cure." The unpredictable elements in life work for each of us — the healing, spiritual power that is at your heart-tip.

Jesus, the Master of purposeful living, believed that if God

had concern for the realm of nature, whether birds or flowers, that man was much greater and God would be close to him — providing man didn't get so distracted by his cares and worries as to forget God. Jesus was not inferring that to be Christian was to be safe, for He likewise said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But with all of your difficulties and troubles, keep your eyes centered on God and you will be aware that unpredictable elements work for you. So often the worst that we worried about turns out to be the best, or as a novelist puts it, "Sometimes obstacles wear spurs."

IV. DO SOMETHING

Dr. Harry E. Fosdick made clear that the problem with multitudes of people today is getting themselves off their hands. There was a Peanuts comic strip in which Lucy is bemoaning the fact that no one is ever going to love her, or no one is going to want to kiss her. Snoopy tries to get her attention and tells her he is leaning over to kiss her. But Lucy goes on moaning that no one loves her, while Snoopy falls on his face. Again she says, "No one is ever going to love me," and Snoopy replies, "You're probably right, sweetie." Lucy was so busy decrying her state she couldn't hear when someone was trying to love her. She needed to get herself off her hands.

If you are a worry box, maybe its because you have too much of yourself on your hands. I remember a road sign in Canada which read, "Choose your rut carefully. You'll be in it for the next 20 miles." Many of us need to get out of our mental and spiritual ruts. There is no more effective therapy for getting yourself off of your hands than by doing something creative and useful — even if you are just like the woman who gives blood to the Red Cross because it's the only voluntary work she can do lying down.

Dr. Reginald Goff, widely known Methodist evangelist, asked a searching question, "If you are a Christian what do you do

for people that ordinary people do not do?" What is it that marks you as a Christian, or a religious person, as over against those who profess no faith? Certainly it isn't your worries — for everybody does that.

Could your uniqueness be in the service you give to other persons? I made a mistake of telling a New York taxi driver to hurry one afternoon. You don't do that in New York if you are in your right mind. From that moment I hung on and prayed that the good Lord intended him to have a long life. When I got out I tenderly commented on his driving and he said brightly, "I'm a whale of a driver." From our conversation he knew I was a clergyman and he added, "I like to serve people. I'm a Presbyterian." I don't think it was ego-centeredness, but perhaps this was a uniqueness that grew out of his faith.

Is your uniqueness in the way you use your talents, express your caring? I don't know what you do well, but I do know that one of the sad things is that so many people settle down and fail to use the talents, the gifts God has given them. And the worst thing in human experience is not tragedy, but meaninglessness. So, if you've got too much of yourself on your hands get out of the rut. Ask yourself what you do as a Christian that ordinary people do not do. It won't cure your worries but it will sure give you something else to think about.

A little boy caught in a cave said to his rescuers, "Don't drop something down to me; raise me up to you." This is what Christ seeks to do for us through involvement — raise us up to His level of God-motivated lives.

V. KEEP CHRIST AT THE CENTER

Dr. Goff said another thing that caught my mind, "We are not called to be followers of Christ." That was rather startling for we preachers are always calling laymen to be followers of the Galilean. But Dr. Goff went on, "We are not called to be followers of Christ, but to live Christ!"

A 12-year-old was asked what he wanted to be when he grows up. He replied, "Possible." The visitor was puzzled, — "What do you mean, possible?" The lad responded, "Every day my mother tells me I'm impossible. When I grow up I want to be possible." When you undertake to live Christ in your day to day experience you really become possible — for nothing becomes impossible.

I have said many times that the greatest word ever to come from your lips and mine is, "I believe in God." For you are saying that there is Someone greater than yourself in the universe, there is purpose and order to life, that God has a hand in human affairs. As Christians we carry it a step further and exclaim, "I believe in Christ." In this we declare that through Him we see the way in which life can be redeemed and lived at its best, that His teachings square with the eternal nature of things as they are, He is the One against Whom we test our lives. Yes, this is what we say — but do we live it? You see, the Christian Gospel says we don't have to worry and fret about every little annoyance that comes along, that whatever happens this is God's world and He's got the whole world in His hands.

Charlotte Elliott spent most of her life in a wheel chair. Dr. Caesar Milan talked with her about the Christian life. She resented it at first and then changed her mind. She asked how she might find life and he replied, "Cut the cable." She did and wrote the wonderful hymn, "Just As I Am."

Possibly you are among those today who need to "cut the cable" of the things that are "bugging" you. Pull yourself free from all the needless worries that are plaguing your mind. Instead of simply saying, I believe in Christ — start living Christ. Anchor this word deep into your soul, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life."

DEALING WITH DISCOURAGEMENT

In the Old Testament Book of 1st Chronicles there is a stirring verse which was born out of difficult days. It was a time when Israel was engaged in war against the Ammonites and Syrians. Nahash, the king of Ammon had died, and David sent messengers to comfort Hanun, a son who succeeded his father to the throne. The King's advisors suggested that the messengers, rather than being men of goodwill, were spies. They were thus taken captive, subjected to many indignities, such as having their heads shaved and sent home in humiliation.

Then it was that Hanun realized his mistake and concluded the incident would mean war. He beckoned Syria to the side of Ammon. It was a dramatic moment as the armies were set for battle, and Joab, the leader of Israel's forces, discovered he was possibly no match for the powerful enemy. Looking into the anxious, but ready faces of his men, Joab said, "Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people. . . and let the Lord do that which is good in His sight."

No one of us is compelled to do battle with Syria, but we are encompassed by enemies of the spirit. They have become such a serious threat to the mental well-being of our people that some psychiatrists refer to this as the "neurotic age." It is estimated that somewhere between 10 and 20 million of our citizens have disorders of the mood and half of them do nothing about it.

Billy Rose tells about a beggar who somehow got into the Rothschild Castle through a back door and actually got to see the famed banker. The financier kindly referred him to his secretary, who turned him over to the butler, who sent him to

see the porter, who directed him to the gatekeeper, who promptly booted him out. He was asked if he got anything. "No," said the beggar, "but the organization in that place is magnificent." Organization is important in business. It is also important in living, for life must be organized around great principles of thought if we are to walk with steadfastness as exemplified in the life of Jesus.

The words of Joab give testimony to the fact that discouragement can be mastered, for even in the face of a superior enemy force this man could say, "Be of good courage and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people. . . and let the Lord do that which is good in His sight."

I. ACCEPT DISCOURAGEMENT AS NORMAL

I participated in a Religion and Medicine Symposium with two distinguished psychiatrists. We talked about the subject of mental depression, which is closely related to discouragement, and in researching the subject, I was amazed at how many different kinds of depression there are. In the psychotic group it ranges from manic-depressive to involutional psychosis to schizophrenia and so on. The victims of such depressiveness have one thing in common: a misinterpretation of reality.

But for most of us depression is a clinical syndrome consisting of a lowering of the mood tone. Over 40 percent of the patients in the Adventist Medical Center are depressed, discouraged persons. But there is a normal mood swing that is common to all of us. The fact is, you'd be abnormal if you didn't grow discouraged at times. No individual can perpetually live in the heights. People in every culture have experienced a mood swing, and interestingly enough it has been found that in the Scandinavian and northern countries of Europe the mood span is wider than in the south around the Mediterranean area.

Someone asked if I ever grow discouraged, presuming I suspect, that preachers live with a halo around the head and are

immune from the experiences endured by normal people. Of course, I get discouraged on occasion as you do. Each Sunday I come into the pulpit with the prayer on my lips that was uttered by the little boy who fell in the barrel of molasses, "O Lord, give to my tongue the ability that the opportunity presents." But there are Sundays when it doesn't quite go that way — the sermon doesn't come up to my own expectations, my delivery is off, my tongue gets tangled up, or the congregation is unusually sleepy. Beyond this, there are programs that fizzle, hopes that are not fulfilled.

The greatest of saints knew despair. Jesus moved from the marvelous transfiguration experience to the cry in Gethsemane, "Let this cup pass." Elijah experienced his triumphant victory over the forces of Ahab on Mt. Carmel and then threw himself under a broom tree and cried, "It is enough, O Lord, take my life." And Martin Luther, in his moments of despair would hurl an ink bottle at the devil.

One of my favorite pictures is that of a boat forlornly beached on the sand, and the caption beneath reads, "The tide always comes back." So, one does not have to succumb to his or her discouragements, because the tide does come back, and life moves on.

II. DON'T LET DISCOURAGEMENT DECEIVE YOU

Discouragement was one of Elijah's difficulties and led to his desire to die. He deceived himself into thinking he had stood alone facing the Baal worshipers. And then the good Lord reminded him that 7,000 others had stood faithfully by his side. At this point Elijah was on the verge of becoming psychotic, for he withdrew into himself and lost sight of his interpersonal relationships. Any individual who believes he stands alone and is the only person who cares about righteousness has let his mind deceive him.

A young fellow became locked in a refrigerator car a few

years ago and was certain he would freeze to death. He felt numbness slowly creeping over his body, and he scratched his sensations with chalk on the wall of the car. The final word was, "This is it." Some hours later he was found dead. But the young man need not have died, for the refrigeration unit had been out of commission three days. The mind does strange things to us when we let it.

In moments of discouragement we need to employ the wisdom of looking at the facts as they are. We would see that there is no reason to run ourselves down or speak depreciatively of our capacities and abilities. Many persons allow their mental slant to hold them back.

I have always liked the spirit of the granddaughter of the late Senator Robert Taft. In elementary school in Cincinnati she was asked to stand and introduce herself. She said, "My name is Martha Bowers Taft. My great grandfather was a President of the United States. My grandfather was a United States Senator. My daddy is Ambassador to Ireland, and I am a Brownie!" No depreciation of herself there.

Never underestimate your inner resources. Dr. John A. Schindler points out that we have within our system the greatest of all health forces, the power of good emotions. Even when we are mentally disturbed the mind struggles to right itself, to be orderly, for there are the same healing forces within the mind that we have within the body. A disturbance, physical or mental, is trying to tell us something, to give us a message. When we pay attention to what that message is, healing takes place.

Someone wrote an editor about a robin with a hurt wing and wondered what to do about it. The editor replied, "Let it alone. The robin is wiser than humans because not knowing much about the difficulties of life, he does not become discouraged, and the channels of immortal help are not blocked by thought." Too often our thoughts, our discouragements, become a block

to healing. As Justice Cardozo put it, "We are what we believe we are."

It is not so much what life brings to us in her hands, as what we bring to life in our spirits that makes the difference between people: "... Life's battles don't always go to the stronger and faster man. But sooner or later the man who wins is the man who thinks he can."

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" is as true today as ever.

III. PUT YOUR RELIGION TO WORK

William Gladstone was four times a Prime Minister of England, and for 61 years served as a member of the House of Commons. His wife couldn't understand how he stood up under the burdens of his office, and he replied with a word that has stayed with me, "I can do it because I try to live *specie aeternatis* — under the aspect of eternity." This is the secret of the power of life of many great spirits — the ability to live "under the aspect of eternity" and let go of a situation when nothing more can be done. To really trust God to see you through when you have done your best is the ultimate test of the depth of one's faith.

We stopped in a little Italian village on one occasion, and in the early evening I slipped into the small Catholic Church just to be quiet and meditate after the rushing of the day. The only other person was a gracious, heavy set lady who, sensing I was a tourist, began a quiet conversation. She told me she was widowed and worked 12 hours a day in a shop. In her broken English she said, "I come here every evening on my way home to find myself." Here she let go of her troubles and let God renew her strength and courage. How wise she was. It was this lovely lady's way of rising above discouragement.

Bob Richards was the world's champion pole vaulter and received an award as amateur athlete of the year. One night at

a banquet in our Santa Monica church he was asked the secret of his success. I have long remembered what he replied, "I owe my achievements to the power of the Lord. . . I mean the psychological influence He exerts over all who search their souls and find there the strength to perform wonderful things."

If you search your soul deeply you know that you, too, can do wonderful things. You have the power within to handle your discouragements if you will take hold of the power of the Lord.

So, "Be of good courage and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people. . . and let the Lord do that which is good in His sight."

GETTING ON TOP OF YOUR FEARS

All of us who were in Los Angeles on February 9, 1971 will never forget when the earthquake roared in with the dawn. It was the only time in the history of Los Angeles that everyone got up at the same time. For many months afterwards multitudes of people lived in fear, and children were afraid to sleep alone. The over 300 aftershocks from the quake didn't contribute to the collective peace of mind. As one woman expressed it, "I'm afraid because there is no place to hide." In a sense you would have to say this of the whole world today: there is no place to hide from terrorists, calamities, nuclear bombs, or guided missiles.

In 1938 James Michener, the author, wanted to get away from it all. He was fed up with the tensions and problems of society, so he took his family to a peaceful island in the South Pacific. The island was Guadalcanal. There are no islands of safety, no beds to hide under.

This has made us an exceedingly fearful generation. Fear is a difficult word to define, but we all understand what it means in relation to our own lives. The word is quoted many times in the Bible, and Jesus used it often. It has several different meanings in Scripture:

1. The Bible expresses fear of calamity — as "Preserve my life from fear of the enemy." Calamity applied to natural disasters as well.
2. Then there is fear of the unknown — "There they were in great fear, where no fear was."

3. Also, the word is given the meaning of reverence or awe — “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” What this means is, “The adoration of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

There is a great text in Paul’s second letter to Timothy. It was born in prison, for Paul was a prisoner in Rome and knew the end was near. I have stood in that subterranean cell in which he lived in chains. It greatly deepened my appreciation of Paul’s capacity to “take it.” He wrote this word to the young man Timothy, “God does not give us the power of fear; but of power and of love and of sound mind.” What Paul is saying is that spiritual power, love and a steady mind are cures for fear. Let’s look at this universal problem of mankind.

I. WHAT IS FEAR

Always the place to begin is to bring into focus what we mean by it. A little boy said, “I’m not afraid, but my stomach is.” We know what that means. A woman in a position of leadership in her community said to her doctor, “I cannot describe my symptoms, the sensations of dread, for I am never without panicky feelings. I am afraid to leave home, yet I hate myself for these fears.” Fear masquerades under many forms: doubt, indecision, procrastination, alarm, timidity, anxiety. Full blown it is terror, horror, shock.

It is said there are 24 major types of fear, some of which are good. Any fear that protects us from harm, or produces a healthy caution is good. But not so with those that keep us stirred up and panicky and rip the heart to pieces.

Two men were sitting next to each other on a train. One had a terrible cold. After listening to him wheeze and cough mile after mile, his companion turned and said, “I’ll tell you what to do for that cold. When you get home soak your feet in hot water, whip up a mustard plaster, take three aspirin and go

to bed." He said, "My name's Howard Butterman. What's yours?" The man with blurry eyes and runny nose said, "I'm Dr. Charles William Mayo." It is so easy to give advice, to tell others how to overcome fear, but actually to do this is difficult. But there are steps that can help.

II. STEPS FOR LIVING ABOVE FEAR

1. Bring your fear out into the open: What is it you fear most today? Get it out into the open and see if there is a real basis for the fear. I recall an elderly gentleman 85 years of age with investments worth at least a half million dollars. Yet he was the victim of haunting fears. I asked why and he said, "I'm afraid I will be left poverty stricken in my old age." I replied, "But this is it!" He hadn't thought of that. His fears were groundless.

A woman said to me recently, "I'm afraid I'm going to have a nervous breakdown." But she wasn't. She didn't give any evidence of the symptoms. Her fears were invalid.

Guilt is sometimes a root cause of fear. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* affords a remarkable illustration of this when Lady Macbeth upbraids her husband for being unable to throw off his guilt, after he murdered the king. In the last act you see her nerves breaking. Lady Macbeth sleeps badly and walks at night in a daze carrying her candle. Her conscience comes and claims a hearing, and her nurse watches her wash her hands again and again as she mutters, "Out damned spot! Out I say!" More scrubbings and then, "Here's the smell of blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! Oh! Oh!" Then her physician, who has been watching from a dark corner exclaims in a puzzled tone, "More she needs the divine than the physician — God, God, forgive us all."

This is one of the most powerful scenes in all literature of the effect of an unrepented wrong upon the mind, and the haunting fears that result. If there is something in the life of any one of

us that isn't right, it has to be made right if the fear is to be cured.

And when one does this help comes. Arthur Gordon tells of once having to face a difficult decision that had him almost paralyzed with fright. He talked it over with an older and wiser man. The old fellow scribbled 10 words on a piece of paper, "Be bold and mighty forces will come to your aid." And they did, for it was Emerson who said, "Do the thing that you fear and the death of fear is certain." For "God does not give us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love and of sound mind."

2. Don't let your imagination run wild: Man has always been a superstitious creature. He has believed that toads cause warts, that a potatoe in the pocket will save him from rheumatism, that a red flag excites a bull more than any other color. To break a mirror means seven years bad luck. Such superstitions are associated with fear in one way or another. Imagination does strange things to us. Think of all the needless bridges you cross. The fear of having an affliction is much worse than the affliction itself. Shakespeare's words are certainly true, "Cowards die many times before their death, but the valiant never taste death but once."

One summer our family vacationed at Lake Arrowhead. It was a gorgeous location in a valley beside a stream, with only two other places nearby. The last two days we were completely alone, and it is surprising how many additional noises you can hear at night when no one is around. About midnight one evening our boys came rushing upstairs to announce that someone was outside on the steps. In order to strike a little fear into whomever it might be, I called, "Wes, get the gun." He yelled back in an equally loud voice, "Dad, where is the B.B. gun?" I rushed out to see who it was. Perhaps I should say I crawled out. Instead of meeting a horrible monster or bear, evidence pointed to a pine cone that had rolled down the steps. Fear of

the unknown, fear of the future can let your imagination run wild. Little wonder 92 percent of all things we fear never really happen.

We need to remember the rule of the saints, "Be strict with yourself." Plato said, "Take control of your mind and you can do with it what you will." Paul exclaimed, "God does not give us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love and of sound mind."

3. Life isn't stacked against you: It is surprising how many people feel there is something in the universe against them — sort of an oblong blur called "the breaks." A young man put it this way, "I guess I was born under an unlucky star." Here is fear designed to paralyze any person from making progress. Sir Walter Raleigh scrawled these words on the window pane of his prison cell in the Tower of London, "Fain would I climb, yet I fear to fall." That's what people say when they think the "breaks" are against them.

The fact is life works with us if we let it. All of us have tough days, and the circumstances of life deal roughly with us. But still one can make life work with him. Dr. Overstreet gave us the marks of a healthy mind: it is curious, adventurous, growing and has the power to heal itself.

You see this in Paul, in spite of his "thorn in the flesh." A theological student trying to figure out what the thorn was said, "Maybe he had a wife." Whatever it was, look what Paul did with the odds that seemed to be against him.

Sometimes the answer is in getting involved, getting ourselves off our hands, and immersing ourselves in the stream of life, as Beethoven was immersed in his music. When he faced obstacles and bitter attacks, he was able to say, "A few fly bites cannot stop a spirited horse." I have stood in that little room in Bonn, Germany where Beethoven was born. His father was an alcoholic and his mother tubercular. They were so poor they

kept the baby in the dresser drawer. But he grew up to write some of the world's greatest music, and he did this when he was deaf. He turned his obstacles into doorways of opportunity, instead of fearfully moaning that life was stacked against him.

That which distinguishes man from animal is his ability to think, to know more than his immediate environment and to shape his future.

4. God can redeem fear: I have always liked the story of the lad who fired a cap pistol in the midst of a boring sermon. As the boy's father marched him out an elderly lady laid a hand on his arm and said, "I hope you aren't going to punish your boy. He's scared the devil out of more people today than our preacher has in 10 years."

Faith in Christ is a prescription that can fumigate the mind of fear. Even such a courageous man as the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover knew the meaning of fear, but he said once, "I lost my fear in the power of the Lord."

If any person ought to have been fearful you would say it should have been Jesus — with knowledge of the intense suffering and cruel death that awaited Him. As He set His face to go to Jerusalem He said, "Fear not, therefore." He did not say, "Fear not, because there is nothing of which to be afraid." Rather, "Fear not, though there be everything of which to be afraid." He did not say, "Fear not, because the sea is calm," but "Fear not, though the waves are tumultuous." His word was not, "Fear not, because life holds no ill for you," but "Fear not, though life holds every ill for you."

Someone says that we need in our lives the "expulsive power of a new affection." Here it is — a new affection for the power of the Gospel, of Christ's words to expel fear can work wonders for your life.

I recall a fine man who, while on a hunting trip, stepped on some rotten planking in a barn and fell 20 feet to a stone floor.

He became totally paralyzed from the waist down, but would not accept defeat. He had an ingenious bed made in which he could pull himself around the room. He learned to type and developed a magazine subscription business. In explaining how he did this the fellow said, "I conquered fear through Christ power." That's a magnificent place to conquer it.

There is a danger of over simplifying, I know. For there are fears that are imbedded so deeply as to require psychotherapy in many instances. But I have been talking about the senseless fears that spring largely from our lack of faith in ourselves and God. In the Hind's Head Hotel, near London, you read these words, "Fear knocked at the door. Faith answered. No one was there." When the faith roots go deep it makes a difference.

We have visited Donner State Park a number of times while vacationing at Lake Tahoe. You wonder how over a hundred years ago the Donner party could possibly have pulled those covered wagons across the prairies and mountains. They were stalled by heavy snows in Donner Pass, and during that agonizing winter many died, but 42 survived.

Sitting on our cabin porch one morning looking at a great pine tree the thought struck me that it was probably there when the Donner party was struggling to live. Through these many years it has withstood the storms of the mountains because it reaches high and its roots go deep.

We, too, are made for the high altitudes of the mind and soul. If we reach high to God and anchor our roots in Christ, we, like the magnificent tree, can endure. We can rise above needless fears knowing that "God does not give us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of sound mind."

OVERCOMING SORROW

John, a prisoner of the Roman Government confined to the island of Patmos, is credited with having written the Book of Revelation. He was a Jew who had lived in Palestine during his early life, then went to Ephesus. As a Christian prophet he fell victim to the wrath of Domitian, who during the last four years of his reign near the close of the first century, instituted a blood bath. Christians were persecuted, tortured and killed by the thousands. John was dismayed but unbowed. He saw the heights to which the human spirit could soar under adversity, when one kept his faith in the ultimate triumph of Christ. In the Second Chapter there is a familiar verse which is a great text, "To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Here he saw man eating of a tree that would make the greatest of masters: the master of himself.

Always we have two choices before us: to be overcome by life or to overcome the experiences that come to us. Lord Byron, while fleeing broken-hearted from England, asked, "What exile from himself can flee?" We cannot run away from ourselves. Always we must confront what life gives us — its great joys and victories, its profound sorrows and frustrations. There are moments when life plunges us to the depths, and then it is that shallowness is not sufficient. We need to think about this problem of sorrow and death, not for the purpose of being morbid, but to enable us to more adequately meet them when they come. Margaret Mitchell, in *Gone With The Wind*, has one of her characters break under adversity and says, "He could be licked

from the inside. I mean to say that what the whole world couldn't do, his own heart could." No person ought to be licked by his own heart, and he doesn't need to be if he has the courage to look realistically at all of life.

Every person at some time, in some way, has to confront sorrow and death. Dr. Avery Weisman, a Harvard University psychiatrist, says that "because man is frightened to death by the specter of death he tries to pretend it does not exist, at least not for him; in the subconscious mind it is other people who die." Ignore it if we will, the fact remains the death rate is still one per person, and ultimately each of us must face it head on.

Let me offer some suggestions that may be helpful:

I. LET SORROW EXPRESS ITSELF FREELY

Grief is not an easy word to define. Even physicians do not agree. One will say it is the symptom of emotional shock. Another may define it as an anxiety state, or temporary depression. Certainly it involves the emotions, and no formula or technique can deaden the stunning grief that comes with the first word of a tragedy, or the loss of a loved one. Words have little meaning during such moments, for the mind is pervaded by a paralyzing emotion. Feelings of discomfort are felt physically, and mental pain stems from a feeling of loneliness. It is to those who close their eyes to the inevitability of death to whom it brings terror.

Several factors condition the way in which we respond to deep sorrow: 1. Our personality structure 2. The social factors that surround us 3. The intimacy of the relationship with the deceased 4. What the individual believes about death and the future life.

Grief, then, involves the total being and is normal. One should let the tears flow freely. There is a point, of course, at which grief becomes pathological. If one is still immobile and living in tears three months after the passing of a loved one, then other symptoms have come into the picture, and the individual

may be feeling more sorry for himself than the departed. But this is not so at the time of death, for out of our suffering we learn that we can “walk through the valley of weeping and make of it a place of springs.”

There is a New Testament phrase which is of more significance than we ordinarily realize — “And it came to pass. . .” Whatever happens to us comes to pass and not to stay. Life’s greatest joys, most thrilling moments, deepest disappointments, most profound sorrows pass away. We discover we have within us a remarkable power for adjustment, and God gives us the courage to keep going, to stay with it — even five minutes longer than we thought we could. The shedding of the tears during the hours when grief is most intense will pass away, and treasured memories will take their place.

II. KEEP ACTIVE AND STAY WITH YOUR TASKS

During the time of a death a multitude of details call for attention, and one is instantly surrounded by friends and relatives. But after a few days a “deafening” quiet settles around one, a seemingly vast emptiness, and time drags. My long haul observation is that people who have many interests, who are related to church and community groups stand up much more effectively to the crisis hours of life than those who are loners. For a couple who are all wrapped up in themselves, with no outside interests, the death of one can be devastating for the other has nothing to fill the vacuum.

Whatever happens to you, determine to go on living. The news reported an incident in a midwestern city when a recently married couple of means were set to go off on a vacation trip. The car was packed and everything in order, when suddenly the husband was stricken and died of a heart attack.

The wife went into seclusion and never came out. Friendships were cut off, and outside interests terminated. Everything in the house was left exactly as it was when “he died.” The break-

fast dishes remained on the table as when last the couple ate together. Prepared meals were brought in by taxi. The bed went unmade, and nothing in the room was disturbed. The car stood in the driveway for years just as when "he died," until it literally fell apart. This went on for some 40 years until the scientist's wife passed away. The fact is she died with her husband, but was buried 40 years later. This is extreme, but it is a picture that has been duplicated to a lesser degree more times than any of us could guess.

The greatest tribute we can pay a loved one is to go on living. A fundamental principle of living is that "life moves on," and we must let it. There is therapy and healing in activity and taking hold of one's tasks. Physical work relieves tension. Never let yourself live in a vacuum.

III. SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Let me offer several practical suggestions that will ease, to some degree at least, the agony of your sorrowful hours:

1. Give some forethought to the mortician you will choose to serve you just as you do a physician. Every individual and family ought to relate to a physician for this becomes exceedingly important at the time of an emergency. The first question you will be asked at the hospital is, "Who is your physician?" If you do not have one this can result in much confusion. Likewise, a question asked at the time of death is, "Which mortuary would you like us to call?" Many individuals are caught with feelings of helplessness because they have never given any thought to this. Many mortuaries now have pre-need arrangements which many people find helpful, and it takes an enormous amount of pressure off your loved ones at the time of your death.

2. Leave some instructions as to what you desire in relation to your funeral. Place them where they are readily available to your family at the time of death. This can avoid a lot of inter-family squabbling as to "what mother or father would like."

3. The questions of whether the casket should be opened or closed, or whether you should have a memorial service without the body present, or whether the service should close at the chapel or church or at the cemetery are to be decided entirely by your feelings and preference. There is no protocol that determines how something must be done, even in relation to music. But your mortician and minister can be very helpful to you in these areas. And don't hesitate to call your minister when a loved one is dying, or at the moment of death, for his presence can be an undergirding force for you, and he can help in many ways at that time when the mind is left stunned.

4. Do not spend more money than you can afford. This may be a strange thing to suggest but it needs to be said, for I have witnessed some rather sad experiences at this point during my ministry. I recall a family, in another community, of moderate means and without insurance, spent several thousand dollars on a funeral. I have found 95 percent of the morticians with whom I have had relationships to be honorable men of deep integrity who do not encourage this sort of thing. Generally the officiating minister will be pleased to assist a family in selecting an appropriate casket and "right priced" service if invited to do so.

5. By all means, make a will. This affords protection for your estate and your family, and your money goes where you want it to go. Any attorney is delighted to give assistance with this at a nominal cost. Speaking as a clergyman, what a great thing it is when Christian persons are so thoughtful as to remember the church in their will. This is one way to let your influence be felt for the things of Christ on earth long after you have moved on to that world of greater dimensions.

6. Do not finalize the time of the memorial service until contact has been made with the minister you desire to officiate. Most morticians make sure this is done, though sometimes a crowded mortuary schedule, or family convenience must dic-

tate the time. Usually a clergyman will cancel whatever engagements he can to be of service to a bereaved family, but there are times when he cannot do this without severely inconveniencing a number of other persons.

7. No effort should be made to conceal talk about the person who has died, or the concern that has come upon you. It is psychologically and spiritually sound to pour out your heart concerning the one loved so deeply, and it will put your friends at ease. Those who call to extend sympathy are sometimes perplexed as to how far they should go in talking about the deceased. They do not want to cause undue upset. So, speak freely and feel no embarrassment in sharing your sorrow and memories.

8. If there are children in the family do not commit the error of shunting them off to grandma's to shield them from the family grief. It is true that a youngster cannot fully begin to comprehend the implications of death until about 12 years of age, but to take him out of the family circle during the period of sorrow can leave him bewildered. It can even lead to severe psychological complexes in later years. In the time of sorrow the children should be permitted to remain within the immediate family circle and to share the wholesome grief of the moment. You do not shut a youngster off from laughter or the joyful experience, and he needs to learn that tears are as much a part of life as fun. A child will be reassured by your conversations concerning the loved one, and efforts to offer some explanation on his level of understanding. Most memorial services today are brief and sound a triumphant note of faith and hope, and there is no reason why children ought not to share in this.

IV. PUT YOUR FAITH TO WORK

Multitudes of us, all of our lives, have sung "The Doxology" and professed faith in the goodness of God. It is strange then,

that many individuals who have been raised in a Christian home, when unexpected tragedy comes, cry bitterly, "Why did God do this to me?" You would really expect them to ask, "What does God expect me to get from this experience?" and move out with faith. How one responds to death hinges around how he responds to life itself. That which spells the difference as to whether one is to overcome the loss of a loved one is the depth of his faith in God. Faith is man's willingness to trust God for those ultimate questions which cannot be completely answered by means of knowledge. So with immortality.

There is something within us — an endowment of the spirit — that causes us to believe that if a rock can survive for 800 million years, or a California Redwood for 3,000 years, man must indeed endure for more than 70 or 80 years.

Henri Bergson endeavored to show that the "mind overflows the brain," that man is more than a body. Through the centuries the belief has endured that man moves toward some "far off divine event" not of his own making. Chancellor Arthur Compton, Nobel prize winner in the field of physics, says, "It seems rather that the fact of free will demands our thinking shall be partially independent of brain activity, a conclusion which suggests . . . the possibility of consciousness after death." Add to the testimony of modern men of science the unwavering faith of 1,900 years of Christianity and its Christ who said, "Because I live, ye too shall live," and multiply this by 2,000 years of the testimony of Judaism, plus 5,000 years of the religious hopes that come out of Egypt — and you see we are dealing with a profound something that grows out of the very nature of man. And, even today, around ancient mummies are found those prayers from the Book of the Dead, "Let me live, O let me live."

Yes, this is the great hope and expectation of man that God lets us live through this strange transition called death. Jesus

became the living testimony that a six by three grave is not the final dimension of man's home. We can trust the character of God to do what is right by human life and surrender to Him our loved ones knowing they are cared for in that world "not made with human hands but eternal in the heavens." I know of no substitute for such faith if one is to live on top of sorrow.

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him; thou art just."

"To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

CHAPTER II



Finding the Reality of God

HOW TO DISSOLVE YOUR DOUBTS

There is a very significant verse in the Gospel of John which reads, "Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; He who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes."

It is not easy to walk in the light today for we live in an age of questions and multitudes of people get themselves lost in the tunnel of doubt and skepticism. Certainly this is true in the field of religion.

This is understandable because the mind is like a telescope — always probing for knowledge. We want to make known the unknown. You see a Socrates standing all day and all night in a trance of thought; a Darwin watching the lowly earthworms; an Einstein writing formulas so complex as to be almost uncommunicable. I recall a young fellow who came forward at the close of a worship service and said, "You're better than Einstein." I swelled a bit with the compliment until he added, "Only two people in the world can understand Einstein. Nobody can understand you." I'm sure there are times when some of my listeners have felt that way.

There comes a time when young people begin to challenge what they have been taught by their parents and teachers. A college science or philosophy course will often succeed in jarring the beliefs of many youth, and it is presumed that if one is to be intellectual he must throw off the shackles of religion. At least I felt that way during my first year of college. I chucked overboard some of my so called "old fogey" beliefs and bordered on agnosticism — which is an important sounding term for "I don't know."

It is good to ask questions, to challenge, for of such stuff is progress born. You'll find doubters even in the Bible, and I suppose Habbakuk could be called the number one questioner of the Scriptures, for he had difficulty reconciling the inconsistencies of life with his noble conceptions of God. He cried out, "O Lord, how long shall I cry out and Thou wilt not hear? Even cry out unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save? Why dost Thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance?" Then he climbed his tower — just what this was is not clear — to listen for some sound other than the cruel sword of Babylon, and there his spirit became calmer, his doubts were resolved, and he heard the voice of God. Job was another fellow who struggled for a time and challenged the justice and rulership of God.

The greatest of saints have known the deepest of despair. John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, was a man second to none in conviction. But there was a time when his soul knew "anger and indignation, which it conceived against God, calling all His promises in doubt."

So it is human to question and challenge. William Lyon Phelps, of Yale, a man whom we regard as a great Christian, said, "My religious faith remains in possession of the field only after a prolonged civil war with my naturally skeptical mind." How do you dissolve your doubts as did Mr. Phelps? For in the final analysis what you believe, you become. Let me suggest three ways:

I. INFORM YOURSELF

Dr. Harry Overstreet has said that "you are as alive as your willingness to learn." We are living in an age of knowledge explosion and it is coming at us from all directions. I recall a midwest college where the football coach was having trouble with his star player who kept flunking his math exams. He rushed into the professor's office and exclaimed, "I've just got

to have this boy for the big game Saturday. Can't you give him another exam?" It was done and thirty minutes later the coach was back to complain, "You flunked him again." Said the math professor, "I only asked him one question — how much is 7 and 7, and he replied 15!" The coach scratched his head and said, "That wasn't so bad. He only missed it by 3." Knowledge is wonderful!

I was speaking for a Pasadena group one evening and sat next to a top computer scientist from Jet Propulsion Laboratories. He was telling me about some of the remarkable things they have been doing, and I had forgotten that we had a satellite roving around Mars. It photographed 90 percent of that planet's surface, and there is an 82 minute time lag in radio communication between earth and the satellite.

I shared with this scientist something of the research taking place in psychic phenomena. Men are being trained to think in the future. For when we send manned space ships out to Mars, Saturn, Jupiter, they will travel at such enormous speeds that man will have to think millions of miles ahead in order to fix something in the present that may go wrong in the future. Ponder that one. My scientist friend agreed. The time lag, which will increase as we go further into space, is expected to be bridged through mental telepathy rather than radio. Dr. J. B. Rhine, now with the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man, says, "We are no longer trying to prove ESP, but rather to find out how and why it works."

Deep research is going on in the area of simply trying to determine what time is. It is called the most "enigmatic property of nature. It links us all and all things in the universe. Any alteration in even a second of time appears everywhere immediately." Time has a flow pattern and it is always toward the future. Time may be the strange, intangible something that maintains the phenomenon of life in the world. The idea of

time “as energy” is a new and revolutionary idea. It is thought that this may be the source of psychic happenings. When you try to contemplate all that is going on about us it leaves your head swimming. We are being told that all living matter from a seed to a human being is surrounded and controlled by electrodynamic fields — and there is an energy field within and around us.

In such a world many people see religion as outmoded by science. Seldom today do you read a newspaper or magazine story that has anything encouraging to say about religion. The result is a weakening of belief structure on the part of many people. How would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 in relation to the strength of your faith in God?

If you are struggling in this area — get informed. Read what learned men, in various areas of experience and research are saying today. Martin Luther said, “Whatever then thy heart clings to and relies upon, that properly is thy God.” We need a God big enough to match the universe.

I hear it said many times that “science doesn’t believe in God.” We seem to forget that there is no such object or concrete reality as science. Science is simply a collection of data, the verifying of it and making comparisons with similar results gathered under the same conditions. It has to do with compilation, verification and observation of facts. Science is not a fixed body of knowledge that sits back and pronounces judgement on everything. It is experimentation and research. Science as science says nothing. But scientists as persons say something, and for every scientist who says “there is no God” you can produce 10 who say you cannot explain the universe without Divine intelligence.

Let it be recalled that the great pioneers in scientific research, such as Galileo, Copernicus and Newton were men of profound religious faith. Copernicus had carved on his tombstone this

simple prayer, "I ask not the grace accorded to Paul, or given to Peter; give me only the favor which Thou didst show to the thief on the cross." Kepler, the brilliant astronomer, who night after night scanned the secrets of the heavens through his telescope, expressed it beautifully in these words, "I think God's thoughts after Him."

Dr. Robert Millikan, the great scientist of Cal Tech, the man who isolated the electron, told me one evening that the greatest discovery he ever made is that "this universe is not the product of a thing, but a thought." It is not simply a mechanism, but the creation of Divine mind.

A group of distinguished psychiatrists, after spending 15 years in research concerning the basic nature of man, said, "Man is made to believe — to believe in something greater than himself."

So you see, it is not only religion that gives a spiritual explanation to things. Before you discard God be sure you know what you are doing. Make sure you have reckoned with the scientists, psychologists, psychiatrists, geologists, astronomers and other men of insight who believe in God and offer evidence of His existence.

A Russian scientist said, "The soul of man has upward longings." Of course, for man, when he is really man, has always felt the pull of another world upon his life. Some call it evolution, but others call it God.

II. RESOLVE YOUR DOUBTS

Each of us can begin to resolve a doubt by discovering truth and living it. That sounds trite, but don't brush it away. You begin by living the truth as you know it.

For instance, we are endowed with the capacity to know right from wrong, though sociologists and criminologists would point to exceptions. It is true that what is wrong for one generation becomes right for another.

I am talking about something that goes much deeper. We are born with the capacity to make right discovery. I talked with a prominent psychiatrist one day, who was not a particularly religious man. He said, "The universe seems to be founded upon a law that says there is a right way and a wrong way to behave." There is a strange force that over the long haul makes for righteousness. As Charles Beard, the great historian expressed it in his famous work summarizing the lessons of history: "The mills of the gods grind slowly but they grind exceedingly fine. Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad with power. The bee fertilizes the flower it robs. When it is dark enough you can see the stars." There is an inevitable grinding out of justice, truth and decency, and the tyrants go down in defeat. Some may see it as energy force, but others of us detect the hand of God at work among men.

I remember Dr. E. Stanley Jones, the venerable Christian statesman, saying, "We are made for the Christian way of life. We are made to have Christian stomachs, Christian livers, Christian lungs." That is to say, that physically we respond to what Christ taught. There is a right way and a wrong way to live.

Here is a good point at which to begin to resolve your doubts. Simply take the basic teachings of Jesus, live them out from day to day and see if they work. Live out what truth about Him that you can believe, that makes sense.

A lot of so called modern atheism is simply an unwillingness to face up to oneself. A student said to me one day, "If I took God seriously I'd have to change some of the things I'm doing." He knew he was doing some things that violated his own sense of right and wrong, but he would not deal with them. If you are on the verge of giving up belief in God, is it because that, in order to believe in Him you would have to stop doing some things you are now doing? Or, to put it another way, do your doubts spring from some problems of personal behavior?

There once was a farmer who had trouble keeping his fence standing through winter and summer. He said, "Something there is that doesn't like a fence." Something there is that doesn't like sin, so the place to begin is to live out the truth as you know and understand it. A compass needle hung in a box of iron will never point to true north. A life circumscribed by knowledge of wrong doing has difficulty focusing upon true values.

III. MAKE A DECISION

Each of us must build his life upon one of two fundamental premises. Either we believe in God or we don't. It's that simple. I have indicated what some great scientists have said, and we need to remind ourselves that religion is not the product of the pygmy minds of the race, but of the greatest minds.

So you inform yourself, you weigh the evidence of those who believe in God and those who do not. Then you set yourself to living out the truth as you know it. And you make a decision.

If you say there is no God, follow what you are saying: life has no purpose, and the universe has no meaning. We are alone in a terrifying and uncaring universe. The things we care for the most are at the mercy of the things we care for the least. All that is fine in human life is a product of chance, and Paul's great love Chapter is hogwash, and Jesus was mistaken.

If you can buy that then blessings on you. But, strangely enough, the direction of human development has led man to believe in a personal God for — man is made to believe.

There still stands Jesus Himself. Seventy-five years ago a young man, George A. Gordon, was mulling over the meaning of life. A student at Harvard, he went into Appleton Chapel to meditate and this thought came to him: "Life stands at the center of the world, human life. Whatever else may be doubted, this at least is clear, that whatever cleanses life, whatever redeems it from the power of evil, whatever brightens and glori-

fies it, that must be true, because life is at the center of the world." If you think of a person of whom this would be true one name leads all others: Jesus of Nazareth. For as Rufus Jones said, "Jesus revealed a new and higher order of life." He offered Himself as evidence for the nature of God, and the God of Jesus was exceedingly personal. Either this Galilean was right or no man has ever been so completely mistaken. But, look across the years, and see that when men, women and young people have taken Him seriously He has been an integrating force in living and life takes on meaning.

So, inform yourself, weigh the evidence, resolve your doubts and make a decision. Look at the direction in which you want your life to move. Who would you want to be like — Stalin or Albert Schweitzer? Each man became what he believed in. Which of the men made the most creative and enduring contribution to life and mankind? The answer is obvious, isn't it?

Dr. Aura Severinghaus, former Dean of Columbia Medical School in New York, and a personal friend, told me as a young man he envied his mother's ability to play the piano. He said to her, "Mother, I'd give anything if I could play like you." She smiled and said, "But, son, you didn't give enough."

We sometimes say, "I'd like to have a strong belief in God. I'd like to be more Christ-like. I'd give anything to get rid of my doubts." But perhaps you haven't tried or given enough.

John was wise, indeed, in saying, "Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; He who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes." Pray God each of us may walk through the darkness of doubt into the light of a great faith.

FINDING GOD IN THE UNIVERSE

When Bishop Richard Raines was minister of Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church in Minneapolis, he was preaching a sermon series on the last words from the Cross. One day during Lent as Dr. Raines drove past the church with his wife, she began to snicker and called attention to the outdoor bulletin board. It read, "Dr. Richard Raines preaching Sunday — "My God, Why?"

I suppose every clergyman asks himself that question at some time. What is it we are trying to do to and for people? What is the purpose of preaching? I remember one clergyman, of whom it was said that he would make a wonderful martyr. He was so dry he'd burn well. And this is one of the perils of preaching. You recall the little girl who was in church one Sunday with her mother, and the preacher was waving his arms and shouting. The youngster turned and asked, "What do we do if he gets out?"

Basically, the purpose of preaching is to help us to discover the way of life and meaning of life. From the Christian perspective the meaning of life is to be found in Christ and His teachings. Beyond this, there are great words that become a part of your life and mine and they help make life, such as God.

Man has always been an eternal searcher. Buried among ashes of ancient campfires, preserved in darkness of long lost caves, archeologists have found crude altars and images indicating man's search for something more than the eye can see. He wants to know about his universe, or, as the song lyrics in "The Music Man" suggest we "have got to know the territory." Yes, we want to know about this territory, this world into which

we have been born. Where did it come from? Who made us? Man is an eternal searcher.

Someone has said that if you are an atheist then you have to be God, for there is no one or nothing greater than yourself. But this is foolishness. Studdart Kennedy, writing from the trenches of France during the First World War, said, "It is God alone that matters." Albert Outler, writing from an entirely different vantage point, says, "If God is not, the unique self is not." If God is not, then man is an accidental bundle of protoplasm. But, if God is, then the Biblical declaration that man is made in God's image is electrifying in its significance. For the fact is that at some point in time man became "a living soul." How? There has never been a finer explanation than the first verse of Genesis, "In the beginning God..."

Pitirim Sorokin in "Man in Society and Calamity" traces his way through history and points out that people have shown two characteristics in meeting distressing periods such as famine, war, migration, and revolution.

One group reacted to such catastrophes with despair and hopelessness, while the other always reacted with the response of courage, devotion and hope. Dr. Sorokin believed that the latter group reacted the way they did because of the higher values in which they believed. Christians have always reacted even with the shout of victory in the presence of tragedy because they believed in God. One cannot ignore such a response. Let's look at some evidences we see for the fact of God in the universe.

I. THE MIND OF MAN

As you well know, it is always popular to speak despairingly of man. You look at what is being fed to us through art, literature, the entertainment media today in relation to the character of man, and he does not make a pretty sight. He is portrayed as violent, a sex fiend, selfish, evil, lazy and good-for-nothing.

But, if you will look at man at his best, that's something else. It led Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler to say, "The greatest thing in man is his mind." How true that is. And you recall the old story of the astronomer who said to a colleague, "When I look at the heavens, the moon and the stars, man seems so insignificant." And the fellow astronomer said, "That may be, but remember — man is the astronomer." Indeed! It is the mind of man that studies and charts the heavens.

We live in a world in which we can dissect things, but man is not a thing. Eric Fromm put it this way, "Man is an unfathomable secret." The simple verse of Scripture, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," was central in the thinking of Phillips Brooks. It referred to the kinship between creature and creator.

When we lived in Santa Monica I remember seeing a water-spout out over the ocean a time or two. A dark cloud could be seen hovering over the water. Then the water became disturbed and tremulous, and the cloud came down. The sea and cloud joined together in one indivisible whirling. You couldn't tell where the cloud ended and the sea began. In a sense man and God are like that. God enters into man and man is a personal expression of God. It is this realm of the spirit that makes man break loose and become a mystery who cannot be explained apart from a Creator.

II. THE PRINCIPLE OF ORDER

The principle of order rules out the possibility of our universe having fallen together by chance. The earth rotates on its axis in 24 hours at about 1,000 miles per hour. If it turned at a rate of 100 miles per hour, our days and nights would be 10 times as long as now, thus we would burn in summer and freeze in winter. The tilt of the earth at an angle of 23 degrees gives us our seasons. Were the moon not exactly where it is the tides would cover the continents. So, instead of chaos we have an order so exact it makes our lives possible. So dependable is the

sun that in Imperial Valley they can tell you the day the lettuce will be ready to harvest. A group of scientists can set up their telescopes along the Amazon, look at their watches and say, "In exactly 30 minutes there will be an eclipse" and there is. We know to the second what time the sun will rise or set on January 1, 2073. We live in a universe of order. To say that this is all the product of nothingness is to ask us to believe something far more incredible than religion ever asks. So, Dr. Cressy Morrison, past President of the New York Academy of Sciences, says, "So many conditions are necessary for life to exist on our earth that it is mathematically impossible that all of them could exist in proper relationship by chance on any one earth at one time." The eminent scientist, Sir James Jeans, has said, "... the universe is a creation of some great Universal Mind underlying and coordinating all our minds."

III. THE REMARKABLE MYSTERY OF NATURE

There are times when nature is violent and unrelenting in the agonies it imposes upon man. The sea gone wild is a formidable enemy for man and ship. The desert of beautiful wild-flowers can, in the heat of the summer, inflict intolerable suffering and death. Tornadoes, typhoons and earthquakes put man to the test again and again.

Still, with all of this it must be said that nature is basically friendly to us. Were this not so we could not endure for five minutes on this earth. It is a world of spectacular beauty and breath-taking mystery. It is said that beauty has no significance until it is filtered through the mind of man, and this is so. The wonders of nature take on meaning only as they are experienced by individuals like us.

But, how many of us are sensitive to these wonders? Jesus asked the question, "Having eyes do you not see. . . ?" So often we are like the fellow who saw the Grand Canyon for the first time and said, "What a wonderful place to throw your old razor

blades." It is easy to live in a beautiful world and not see it, to miss the mysteries of nature.

I remember an old horse named Nell that we had up on the old Minnesota farm when I was a boy. She looked like she had been put together by a committee. My uncle and I would go into town on Saturday nights and it was pitch black when we drove three miles home. She had a bad habit on occasion of deciding to lie down in the middle of the road. It was so dark we couldn't even see her. But, I always marveled how old Nell managed to make her way along that road when we couldn't see a hand in front of our faces. Later I learned that the difference in the temperature of the road and the sides registers with a horse. The eyes are effected by the infra red rays of the road.

Or you think of the remarkable telepathy of such creatures as a female moth, which will send out some kind of a signal from a window in your attic. Over a wide and unbelievable area the male moths of the same species will catch the message and respond. Does the female have a broadcasting set and the male a receiver? The katydid rubs its legs together (or wings) and on a still night can be heard a half mile away. It shakes 600 tons of air and calls its mate.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox captured the mystery in these words:

Tune your ears to all the wordless music of the stars,
And to the voice of nature.
And your heart will turn to truth and goodness. . .
And all the forces of the firmament shall fortify your
strength.

The marvels of nature are numerous and beyond measure.

So . . . A fire mist and a planet; a crystal and a cell,
Some call it evolution, and others call it God.

IV. THE PULL OF THE BEYOND

Man, when he is really man, always feels the strange pull

of another world upon his life. And the really strange fact about it is captured by Dr. Cressy Morrison, to quote him again, "The fact that man, everywhere at all times, from the beginning to the present day, has felt the impulse to call upon something he believed to be higher and more powerful than himself, shows that religion is innate and should be scientifically recognized. . . reverence, generosity, nobility of character, morality, inspiration and what may be called Divine attributes do not arise from atheism or negation."

The pull of the ought-to-be defies rational explanation. When you act like a heel, compromise your convictions and betray what you believe to be true, something on the inside painfully makes us aware of this. Materialism cannot account for it, and atheism is at a loss to explain it. The Christian sees it as God at work in human life.

We ourselves did not create the desire to know God. Fish have fins because the water was here first. We have eyes because the sun was here before us. We respond to something that was here before we came — and so with God.

If belief makes no difference, it is strange that this should be true, isn't it — that man needs a spiritual outlook to be really man. Little wonder in every generation he has declared, "I believe in God."

Around 100 A.D. a minister preached a sermon to a congregation in Ephesus. Clouds of persecution swirled around the little church, and death could have been their lot. Their preacher had but one theme and it is this: If you really want to know what God is like, look at Jesus Christ. He called His people, "Sons of God" and "Children of the highest." It was a word of inspiration that kept them going.

Now let's come to this century and hear the word of the great scientist, Dr. Arthur H. Compton, former President of Washington University in St. Louis, "An aspect of God that I recognize is that which shows itself in the lives of noble men. It is

in their lives that I see exemplified the virtues to which I would commit my own life. For me the outstanding example of these noble men is Jesus. As I know Jesus He shows in His life those qualities that seem to be of highest value — love of neighbor as expressed in helpful service; hope for the future that inspires His followers; faith in God and His fellow men.”

Or come back to the illustrious Rufus Jones, a man who was the inspiration behind the life of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, “Jesus revealed a new and higher order of life. He offered Himself as evidence for the nature of God.”

You cannot ignore Him, for Jesus stands as unique in history, and you can test out His teachings and they work. I know this — no man can build a life on doubt. If you are honest, have a scale of values that honors persons, search for truth, live with moral integrity, believe there is Someone greater than yourself in the universe — you are basically a religious person.

A seed will always remain a seed until it comes in contact with soil and water — something outside itself. To become what it is supposed to be, it must be influenced by power outside of itself. And so with man. Across the centuries he has declared, “I believe in God.” Little wonder the prophet cried,

“Lift your eyes, look up!
Who made all these stars?
He marshalls them in order,
Summoning each by name?
... Do you not understand
That the eternal is an everlasting God,
The Maker of the world from end to end?
He never faints, never grows weary
His sight is unsearchable
Those who wait for Him renew their strength,
They put out wings like eagles,
They run and are never weary,
They walk and never faint.” (Isaiah 40)

Dr. Harry Overstreet says that religion is a “belief in the universe that quickens me in all my upgoing trends.” Thank goodness for something that does that for us. It happens when a man has the depth of conviction to say — and mean it, “I believe in God.”

CHAPTER III



Living to Be Your Best

A BLUEPRINT FOR LIVING

I have always remembered a letter I received from a young friend several years ago. It has in it this line, "I hope you stay alive as long as your heart lasts." It is obvious that some people die before they are buried.

You see this in Ernie Pyle, an outstanding reporter and man of great bravery during World War II. He wrote before his death, "There is no sense to the struggle, but there is no choice but to struggle. It seems to me that living is futile." Then he added, "I wish you would shine your light in my direction. God knows I've run out of light." An era like this, with its cataclysmic changes and constant emphasis upon speed and hurry does that to a fine man.

Dr. Leslie Weatherhead expressed it this way, "The tragedy of life is not the fact of death itself, but in what dies inside a man while he lives — the death of genuine feelings, inspired response, of awareness." Still, each of us searches for this elusive something we call life, and often we sense there is a great chasm between where we would like to be and where we are. In the words of a Broadway play, "How can I be what I ain't?" It isn't easy. Perhaps a woman was closer to the truth than she realized when she called a termite company and said she had "turmoils under my porch." We also have turmoil under our mental porches.

Jesus gave us a remarkable word which is an antidote for turmoil and futility, "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." He made this statement in the midst

of great tension and pressure, for He was aware a plot was being formed against His life, and that Judas would betray Him. Just ahead was the terror of crucifixion week. This is why it is a revealing word. You wonder how in the world the Galilean could maintain such poise.

When you read the Gospels you discover three things about Him, among many, that suggest for each of us a blueprint for living.

I. HE DID A LOT OF WALKING

You say, "Of course, He did. There weren't any street cars, buses or planes." It is wonderful to live in an age in which we can fly around the whole world within a few hours, but possibly our speed sometimes costs us something. We lose touch with some simple values. I remember Dr. Roy L. Smith telling of flying to Tokyo. They put down at Anchorage and it was announced they would be there two hours for some minor repairs. Roy decided to get a haircut, and half way through the plane was announced. On one side his hair was slick and on the other it stood up all around. He wore his hat to Tokyo, but what really threw the barber there was when he asked for half a haircut. Hurry does this to us.

Dr. John Finley, former editor of the *New York Times*, had an interesting philosophy, "Read a book, make a friend, take a walk." It is interesting to discover how many times walking is mentioned in the Bible — over 400 references to the word.

It has several different meanings: exercise, recreation, meditation, reflection. James Stalker, in his "Imago Christi" said, "A wise man once suggested to me that he was too busy to be in a hurry." It is in this sense that I think of it as a blueprint for keeping yourself alive physically, mentally and spiritually. It keeps you from losing sight of the glory of common things. The Old Testament speaks of Adam and Eve having "heard

the sound of the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the day." It's a wonderful thing to do.

I suppose I have become more sensitive to this because I am required to walk two miles a day. I don't always make it, but I have had to put into my life the discipline of doing some walking every day. It's amazing what you see when you walk through your neighborhood instead of drive through it! You begin to hear new sounds. Some years ago, after having been in the hospital for many weeks, I used to walk along the Santa Monica Palisades for a little while every afternoon, for when you've been grounded for a time you realize anew what a tremendous gift it is to be able to walk. At first all I could hear was the honking of auto horns, but as the days went by I became sensitive to the chirping of the birds, the grace of a flying seagull, and even the flowers planted along the way. I began to make some new contacts with my environment, and it brought to mind what Chesterton said once, "You can look at a thing 999 times and be perfectly safe, but if you look the 1,000th time you are in danger of seeing it." Some of the world's greatest discoveries come with the 1,000th look. Charles Darwin looked at a flower for 10 minutes and it led to his "Origin of Species." Jesus never lost sight of the glory of the world about Him.

Sometimes we have to hear a word or a sound a hundred times before we really get it. We listen poorly, according to the scientists. This is why the advertising media has developed the art of repetition.

What I am saying simply is to discipline yourself in the art of walking, looking and hearing. It keeps you alive to sights and sounds that become lost in the hurry of life.

II. HE DIDN'T FRET

A second strength that you see in the person of Jesus is that He didn't fret. He spoke about the uselessness of worry. But we

really do not hear this for we are worriers of the first order and fret about so many things. Our problem is not so much that of being all run down as being all wound up. Dr. Hal Luccock said, "Paul's 'this one thing I do' has become for us these forty things I dabble in." Or, as was said of Artemus Ward, "He tried to do too much and succeeded."

Certainly, most of the things that command us may be good in themselves, but Elbert Hubbard reminded us that "corn is a weed if it grows in a wheat field." The good can become the enemy of the best. Devotion to business, splendid in itself, may crowd out human fellowship. Many people believe they are too busy to go to church, that other things are more important on Sunday: mowing the lawn, washing the car, doing the washing. So in our sweep of many things we crowd out those values that give undergirding to life and settle the mind. Too many people never give themselves a change of mental pace and so they go through life weighted down by worries and fretting. Seneca said once, "He suffers more than is necessary who suffers before it is necessary." Mark Twain once put it this way, "I am an old man and have experienced many troubles that never happened." But they might just as well have because they happened in his mind.

Dr. Karl Menninger says that men do not break down because they are defeated; only because they think they are. What we are talking about is the pitch of your mind, the direction of your attitudes. Perhaps the little girl was right who said to her complaining mother, "Mother, never judge a day by its weather." Stop fretting about nonessentials.

III. HE HELD FAST TO A QUIET TIME

Here we put the finger on the key to Christ's inner strength and power. Lowell Thomas, Jr. tells of the terror of the Alaska earthquake through which his family survived. It was a horrible moment as their house slid over the cliff toward the sea

in an ever-widening chasm. As the family huddled together awaiting the end, every thought was a prayer for those whom he loved. Miraculously, the house lodged in the rubble at the foot of the bay, and the family got out just before their home crashed into the sea. It happened on Good Friday.

Easter Sunday they were in church on a cold, frosty morning, but everyone sang lustily for they knew they had been snatched from death and the Resurrection had new meaning. People who had lost so much still felt they wanted to give to help others because they had life. My, what a discovery that is — when you discover how little you have really given to God and man.

Mr. Thomas said this interesting thing, that what amazed him was the courage people exemplified in their ability to climb from the edge of the bay to the top of the cliff again. This is the glory of human beings. It is the spark of God within man that enables him to climb from the depths to the heights. Sometimes it takes a tragedy, such as Lowell Thomas experienced to jar one back to a realization of what really matters in life — for when you get to the core of existence what is ultimately significant is one's relationship to God, family and friends. These provide the motivation to climb from disaster's edge to the top of the cliff.

We need to keep our relationship to the good Lord fresher than we do. Jesus did this by keeping hold of a quiet time each day, when he drew away from the multitudes and prayed. If ever a generation needed the quietness of God, ours does. Even Paul in his day said, "...aspire to live quietly..."

God rings no bells, beats no drums, blows no trumpets. He is not heard in the strong winds or the earthquakes that shake a city, but "In the still small voice." He leadeth me beside the still waters — and here He restoreth my soul, suggested the Psalmist.

There is great power in quietness. Sometime during the day save some moments for prayer, meditation and reading on deep things. It provides the spark that enables us to climb from the depths, when life hits us hard, to the heights where we go on living with splendor. It is silent power that is the real power of the universe.

Recall the story of a student who said to Dr. Luccock in his class, "Doctor, I think religion is a lot of moonshine." Asked the distinguished professor, "Have you ever watched a full moon rise out of the Atlantic Ocean?" The young man said he had. "Have you ever observed a 10 foot tide sweep in against the shoreline?" Again the answer was in the affirmative. Dr. Luccock went on, "Have you stopped to realize that it is the silent power of that giant moon that moves the tides of the ocean back and forth day after day, year after year. I like your definition: religion *is* moonshine!" In what way? Religion is the great silent power of God that pulls at the tides of your life and mine day after day, ever calling us from the depths to the heights.

Three blueprints for strong living, then: Jesus did a lot of walking, He didn't fret, He held fast to a quiet time. Even today we look at this strange man of the cross and call Him Master. Do these three things and they will help each of us to understand His words, "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

THREE STEPS TO REAL LIVING

One evening in association with my ministry as a Police Chaplain, I stayed in the Emergency Room of a hospital with a man who had been critically injured in an accident. He and his wife were visiting here from out of state. He had no recollection of being hit by a car, was in great pain, and as I sought to reassure and comfort him and minister to his anxious wife, the hurt gentleman suddenly turned, looked at me and asked, "Who am I?" He had no recollection of the accident and momentarily couldn't remember who he was.

More and more we are trying to understand ourselves today, and not infrequently is the question asked, "Who am I?" It is a vital one, and Christianity has always seen the understanding of self as the core of its healing ministry. The Prodigal son went into the far country and "came to himself." When we do that we begin to live.

There is an old text that is a favorite of mine, and one on which I have preached many times through the years. It is from the Book of Proverbs, and the writer said very succinctly, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." The great struggle of mankind from that day to this has been the mastery of the inner spirit, the discovery of that which makes for real living.

Let me suggest three things:

I. STAY ALIVE AS LONG AS YOU LIVE

This sounds strange but it is surprising how many people let age rob them of life. They die long before they are buried. An old slogan used to say, "Millions now living will never die." In

our day it can be said millions now living are already dead. They live enveloped by nothingness. You remember how one fellow expressed it, "I am a peanut in Yankee Stadium."

Let's face it. We live in a tough world and to survive in it you've got to be strong. Without strength we crumble or get crushed, and the spirit and attitude with which we face our days makes the difference. I wish more of us could say with the little girl who was slow responding to the dinner call, "Wait a minute Mom, I'm having a good time with myself." Age is no barrier to inner well-being, or a useful life. No one needs to say as a man exclaimed to me one day, "I'm losing the battle of my mind."

Someone has said that in growing old we don't feel our oats as much as our corns. True, but listen to these words of George Santayana, "Never have I enjoyed youth so thoroughly as I have in my old age." I often think of that thought of Bishop Herbert Welch, a great bishop of the Methodist Church who lived to be 106. When he was 102 Art Linkletter interviewed him on his show and asked the bishop how long he expected to live and he replied, "Forever, for you don't hear of many people dying after they are 100."

Dr. Fosdick said that the worst thing in human experience is not tragedy, but meaninglessness. Sometime ago a young woman set herself aflame near a Los Angeles gas station. She was severely burned over 99 percent of her body, but amazingly she lived. A doctor explained it in these words, "She regained her will to live." The will to live and the determination to overcome so often spells the difference between living and dying.

As we grow older we can develop some new skill or interest, even if it is just looking up the places on a map that make news today. How many of us know where the Gulf of Aquaba is, or Rangoon and Rhodesia. Think what such a simple thing as checking the maps could do for your knowledge of the world.

Or there are so many ways to enrich the lives of others. I officiated for the funeral of a fine man who for 25 years sent cards and notes to his friends, and members of groups to which he belonged, when they were ill or having some hard going. It helped him to get his mind off of himself. This is what Jesus meant when He said that if you are going to find your life, you must lose it — lose it in something that is outside of yourself. In St. Paul's Cathedral, London, this line is over the entrance, "If you wish to see the monument of Christopher Wren look around you." What monuments are you leaving? With what great causes is your name identified?

II. REMEMBER YOU ARE SOMEBODY

We confront two extremes today: those who have too low an estimate of themselves, people who do not love themselves enough, and those who have too high an opinion of the self and ride out their days with an air of superiority.

It was Dr. Joshua Liebman who scolded us for not loving ourselves enough. Jesus said, "Love thy neighbor as yourself." He presumed we had enough appreciation of our own worth in God's sight that we could extend this to include our neighbor. So, one cannot hate himself and love his neighbor.

Others are trapped by the lure of superiority. They go after recognition in strange ways. Lyle Dougherty spread the word he could get watches wholesale. Soon he was getting requests for TV sets, electrical appliances and even cars. He said, "It made me popular," but the trouble was he got nothing wholesale. He spent all his savings and borrowed from banks and finance companies. He collected \$121,000 to buy things wholesale and spent \$151,000 for them. He failed to deliver a car and instead of getting a place in the sun, he got a place in jail.

God has put within each of us, whatever our race or creed, the capacity to be somebody. Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." In God's sight we are significant.

Each of us is important. Not too many of us have extraordinary talents. There aren't too many Phi Beta Kappas among us, and not too many folks have spectacular jobs. This causes some of us to feel that we are little more than "sad and silent ciphers" in the wheels of society. But small parts are significant.

My dad was not a particularly spectacular individual. He was a man of great character and loyalty. When I was a youngster he was foreman of the baking department for the Pauline Chambers Company in Canada. During World War I feelings ran high against German citizens in Canada. One day a frenzied mob made its way into the plant intent on dragging out the Germans who worked there. They were going to shoot them on the spot. One of the bake ovens was not being used. Dad put three German bakers who worked for him in it and sent it revolving so they were out of sight. These men were everlastingly grateful to my dad, for he likely saved their lives that day. It was one of those moments when an ordinary person played an important part in a passing moment of history.

You have moments when this is true of you — when in the great symphony of God we have a place and in His sight we are somebody. The loyalty that you and I give to our day to day responsibilities weave this strange, intangible fabric of what we call our free way of life. So, never sell yourself short. Should you suddenly drop from the picture today the world of those who love you would be plunged into agony and sorrow. For God never made a nobody.

III. SEEK MORE DEEPLY TO BE CHRIST-LIKE

As I look back upon my ministry and thousands of counseling experiences, I would say there are 5 different human problems:

1. Fear
2. An over-active ego which causes life to turn in upon itself causing people to stand in their way
3. Guilt deeply rooted in association with experiences of the past
4. Inability

to forget and forgive 5 Over-reacting to discouragement so it becomes self-defeating.

Astronaut John Glenn said, "What is needed is a basic conviction so strong that it lifts individuals clear out of themselves. . . ideals are the very stuff of survival." Or, listen to Dr. L. Chase, a clinical psychologist, who believes that the decline in spiritual value is the most contributing factor to neurosis in the United States today. You might expect a minister to say that, but Dr. Chase says, "God is within every one of us. I don't believe it. I know it. I have seen what happens when it slips away. It is something you have to consciously work toward."

Paul expressed it this way, "Put on Christ," for then you identify with your best self. It means being concerned with the quality and not the quantity of life. There are people who could live on a much higher Christian level if they would clean up the slum areas of their minds, hearts and vocabulary. Riding the police patrol cars as I do about once a week is a revealing education in how people act when the raw nerves of life are touched. In disturbance calls some of the language we listen to, and what people call each other, is almost unbelievable. This has become what someone has called "the era of the dirty mind." It stains all of us and I know of nothing that cleans up life more adequately than putting on Christ. The Bible is filled with stories of people who become more than they were when they did this.

If we put on Christ we'd be more tender and loving persons and God knows we need people like that in our society. When you study its affect upon life it is evident that love, not hate, is the core of life, the source of healthful living.

I know I go home some nights, think back upon the day, and my soul writhes in agony as I become sensitive to the lack of tenderness in some of my human relationships. We become so brittle, so defensive, so impatient, so threatened. It is so much easier to act like a small child than a Christian statesman. Too

often we are unloving persons proclaiming a Gospel of love. Have you put on Christ to the depth of being a loving, caring person?

Finally, putting on Christ means having a deeper hold on God. For then we realize there is an "I, yet not I" in your life and mine, One who has a hand in our days. God is the "I, yet not I" in your life and mine.

There is a tree west of Cheyenne, Wyoming near the Continental Divide that has grown out of solid rock and is a national monument. When it was a shrub the Union Pacific trainmen used to throw water on it from passing trains, to keep it alive. Today it is a strong, sturdy tree. Here it bends and sways under the impact of the bitter winds and snowstorms galore. The tree can trust its foundations to hold it steady. We, too, can bend and sway under the storms of life knowing that we can trust our foundation when we put on Christ. For then we know who we are: sons of God and through His power nothing can defeat us within.

"For he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

PUTTING ON A BETTER YOU

I was walking down Portage Avenue in Winnipeg some years ago and in a shoe store window there was on exhibit a giant pair of shoes. They looked like the shoes the old woman must have lived in who had so many children she didn't know what to do. Alongside this exaggerated footwear refuge for giant feet was this sign, "Yours for nothing if you can wear them." There was little likelihood of anyone laying claim to this pair of shoes, for the hitch was in the phrase, "...if you can wear them."

There are some types of growth over which we have no control, whether your stature, the length of your fingers or the size of your eyes. And, certainly we cannot do much about big or little feet. But we sure can do something about the growth of the mind and spirit. We can set ourselves to being better than we are. Each of us can think of some areas of our lives that need sharpening up.

Someone has said that we live in a generation marked by the Gospel of a good start and this is good for to begin something new is akin to a mental tonic — whether a fresh school term, an intriguing hobby, the first day on a job you've been seeking, or taking up the same task after a vacation. I recall a seminary professor who, on the first day of the quarter, always said this to his students, "As of this moment you all have an A grade in this course. All you have to do is keep it there!" Ah, that's something else. Most of us start out with the sparkle of a fireworks display, but, unfortunately, we peter out about as quickly. I can't think of anything that is less exciting than an exploded firecracker, unless it would be a dill pickle.

The question is: are we still sparkling at the middle of the term, is the job as appealing five years later, does life itself still hold the promise we once anticipated?

You wonder what it is that enables people to say "yes" to life, as did Jesus. What is it that keeps them marching confidently through their days, when others throw in the towel or burn out? Why does one person have the courage to stay with it five minutes longer than he thought he could, while multitudes of good-intentioned souls quit five minutes after they get started?

Willy Ley published a book some 20 years ago in which he discussed the conditions that would have to be created before a rocket could break away from earth's gravity. He said that to do this the rocket would have to achieve a speed twice what had been possible up to that time. The critical speed was called "escape velocity."

There are so many people whose "escape velocity" from life is so much greater than their forward thrust. The result is they are always running away from themselves rather than getting with it. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians once said, "Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of evil." Here he is challenging us to put on a better person. He expressed it this way to the Philippians, "Let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ." Let me suggest several ways to put on a better you, ways in which to enlarge our "mental shoes" and say "yes" to life.

I. LOOK AT YOUR RESPONSE TO LIFE SITUATIONS

Ask yourself how you are responding to life situations. Do you handle well what life gives you? I'm not sure where the idea originated that life is supposed to be easy and good, or that everything that happens is God's will. How often have you cried through agony of soul, "Why did God do this to me?" Sometimes we feel that God screens us out for the thunder of suffering. And something within us rebels and it causes some

people to lose what a modicum of faith they had. It is strange how differently persons respond to life experiences.

Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron were both lame, but they responded so differently. High strung, ambitious men, their handicap had a profound effect upon their lives. But how dissimilar were their reactions. Sir Walter Scott lived a radiant life and maintained a warm spirit, while Lord Byron brooded over his blemish and, as a friend put it, "He magnified a wart into a wen." Henry Thoreau expressed it this way, "As long as a man stands in his own way, everything seems to be in his way."

Everything isn't going to go your way during the months ahead, not every day will you feel like singing, "O, What A Beautiful Morning." It will be tough to maintain that A grade, but this is where your response comes in. Will you say "yes" to life, whatever the circumstance, or will you want to accelerate your "escape velocity" five minutes after you start?

One of the helpful things in putting on a better you is to study the lives of people who have triumphed in the midst of disappointment. You don't have to turn to history, for so often you observe persons whose manner of life, of response is worthy of the Gospel of Christ. I saw this in a woman named Betty Harshman. Some years ago she learned she had Hodgkins disease and with rock-bound courage she lived mentally and spiritually on top of a declining health experience. Through innumerable miracle drugs, new techniques of treatment, and days of painful, hard going she was always hopeful. She did not succumb to her discouragements. This is a great thing.

Carl Sandburg wrote of Americans heading west with this line chalked on the wagons, "The cowards never started and the weak ones die by the way." And old Dr. Samuel Johnson exclaimed, "I despise anyone who has been driven by life into a corner, who will not come out fighting or at least bark as I do." Althea Gibson, the tennis star, said, "If there is any one thing

that contributed to my success, it was my ability to take an awful lot of punishment along the way.”

I well remember a day when we journeyed from Naples to Pompeii and skirted Mt. Vesuvius. What caught me was the richness of the soil on the slopes of that crater-crowned cone, and how luxuriant the vineyards and olive groves which patch the fringe of its garment. That soil was once volcanic dust which on August 24, 79 A.D. mushroomed from the summit, hung like an atomic cloud in the sky and then rained like hot snow to a depth of many feet, wiping out the loam. I see people who take the tragedies of their days and respond magnificently and their spirits become as fertile as the vineyard.

The Finns speak of “Sisu” which is a superhuman nerve force that God puts within each of us. “Put on the whole armour of God . . . and let your manner of life, of response, be worthy of the Gospel of Christ.” So, stay with it. It isn’t enough to start well. Say “yes” to life irrespective of what happens to you for then nothing can defeat your spirit.

In one of his 3 minute plays, Thornton Wilder pictures an infirm doctor standing by the pool of Bethesda waiting to be healed, and an angel says, “Stand back, healing is not for you. Without your wound where would your power be that sends your voice into the hearts of men?” It is by what we endure that we make our life.

II. CONNECT UP WHERE YOU ARE

One spring I had a pulling urge to revisit my home town. I have continued to carry the picture frame of my recollections of how it used to be. So back to Winnipeg we went and my memories were jolted. It wasn’t like it used to be. The old school, where I began first grade, has been condemned, and St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church, which marked my early Sunday School days, was coming down for the glory of a new hospital unit. But what really threw me an “I remember when” curve

was the discovery that the tall pine tree on what used to be the family Minnesota farm is no more. It was the landmark that illuminated my sense of direction as a youngster. Strange it is how we get anchored to things as they were.

The world famous radar observatory at Jodrell Bank in Cheshire, England, is a fascinating place. It is part of Manchester University, and Jodrell's huge, saucer-shaped, mobile reactor resembles a giant listening ear attuned to the stellar universe. A doctor of science stationed there apologized one day for keeping a friend waiting and said, "I have just been listening to the explosions of stars which burst three million years ago." It is astounding how dramatically the past projects itself into the present.

It is true with your life and mine. Multitudes of people connect up with their environment beautifully, while others are ever claimed by the past. They long for what is everlastingly called "the good old days," — a return to things as they were. I cannot respond excitedly to the prospect of a return to kerosene lamps and flannel underwear to keep warm. How simple it is to step up our "escape velocity" to glories of the past that never really existed. So often we are like the fellow who said, "My imagination thinks big."

Dr. Harry Overstreet points out that one is as alive as the way he handles his past and connects up with his environment. An alive person responds to the reality about him. How do you do this? I have suggested one way: do not expect the present to perpetuate an atmosphere that is gone.

Another way is to relate meaningfully to other persons. Dr. Howard Clinebell says that "The will to relate is stronger than man's will to power, or to meaning or to pleasure." Dr. Rollo May speaks about our impression worth: the impression we make on others and our response to the impact people, ideas and things make upon us. This brings us back to where we started —

to our response to life situations. How well do persons get through to you?

I speak of one other way to connect up where you are: tie your life to something current, a contemporary group that seeks to lift the level of life. I invite you to look again at the church. My, how many people live in the past as far as their church relationship is concerned. Remember, the church is not unmeaning lumber, but is made up of the music of men's souls and the beating of human hearts united in working for a better world.

I sometimes meet people who do not unite with the church because of some scars from a past relationship, some wound that still festers. When Bishop Adna Leonard was pastor of First Methodist Church, Seattle, he said something that created irritation. Someone broke into the church and dumped the pulpit over onto the rail, inflicting a deep scar. When the sanctuary was renovated much later, the membership refused to remove the scar from the rail. It is a reminder of a historic incident. There are scars that can be worn with pride, but others ought to be shellacked and covered over. Don't live with scars from the past you need not bear. Connect up with the here and now and move out beyond yesterday.

III. RECOGNIZE YOUR SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

From my earliest days I have held to the undergirding and life-cleansing belief that we do not function through our own power alone. Each of us must build his life upon one of two premises: 1. There is a supreme power or intelligence that has a hand in human affairs; 2. There is not a supreme power — we are on our own. What I say, then, is anchored in the belief that Jesus was right in His revelation of God, and there are spiritual resources that are as much a part of the universe as the law of gravity.

In the play "Victoria Regina" the queen says to the bishop, "Religion ought to be simple and make sense." Of course, there

is a danger of oversimplification, just as there is in getting our faith so tangled in the streams of theological thought that you do not know where you are. But to state it simply, the Christian faith says that we do not walk alone, that the universe is basically friendly to us, that there is a God whose stream of power touches your life and mine.

It must be a soul-triggering moment when one makes a great scientific discovery. I think of John Logie Baird there at St. Leonard's-on-Sea, Sussex, who spent long and lean years in unproductive research. Then came the explosive moment when he dashed madly downstairs, grabbed the first person he met, yanked him up to his room, set him down unceremoniously in front of his lamps and cameras and gave him, unknown to the lad himself, the honor of being the first person ever to appear on television.

But grand as that is, I do not know of anything that is more joyously intoxicating than when one makes the discovery in a real way for himself that spiritual forces are within reach, that God is alive, that what we proclaim here is not a figment of the imagination, but a living fire of the heart.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick said that a characteristic of people with spiritual power is this: they discover the joy of habitual Christian thinking and live in the high levels of the mind. They are people committed to faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love. They are persons committed to Christ and His way of living.

Cyprian, bishop of the church at Carthage in the third century, wrote in a letter to his friend Donatus, "... It is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted but they care not." Then listen to this word as Cyprian

goes on. "They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people, Donatus, are the Christians — and I am one of them."

I would want to say that of myself. I know of nothing that helps you put on a better you than a deep commitment of your life to Christ our Lord, a willingness to take Him deeply within the inner sanctum of your spirit and say, "I want to live and act as He did."

It is said that travelling through the archipelago of southern Alaska, one passes first around Cape Decision before he finds himself in Christian Sound. Here is a parable of life: decision and then a sound inner being. As I look out over our world with all of its turmoil and tragedies, if I had never before been a Christian, I would want to be one now — for as the old southerner said, "Jesus is the only somebody you can't match."

So, look at your response to life situations, connect up where you are, recognize your spiritual power and "Put on the whole armour of God... and let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ."

BEING BORN FOUR TIMES

Visualize in your mind a scene late at night. It is somewhere in Jerusalem and a man named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, asked for the appointment. Why at night? Well, Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, which had 71 members and was the equivalent of our Supreme Court. It was a legislative and religious body with much power. So, Nicodemus was a man to carry much influence. The late night meeting was not so much because of his fear of being seen with Jesus, but he had a desire to settle some questions in his mind. He had heard compliments, as well as criticism, about the Galilean, and being fair minded he wanted to make sure of the facts. Possibly he had stood on the edge of the crowd when Jesus spoke and wondered about the secret of this Christ-like living.

The late evening conversation began on a high level, and Nicodemus said, "We know you are a teacher come from God for no man could do the things that you do except God be with him." The exchange was a brief one as recorded in the Third Chapter of John, but he includes what Martin Luther called "the heart of the gospel." Ralph Sockman spoke of it as "the gospel in a golden nugget." It is in a verse most of us memorized in Sunday school, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." Jesus ended the conversation with Nicodemus with a searching sentence, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." He further illuminates this word, and makes clear that a person must be born again, or to use another translation "born from above."

Well, Nicodemus was astonished, as many of us are, and asked, "How can this thing be?" How can an individual be reborn once he is born? I would respond by saying that each of us needs to be born four times.

I. PHYSICALLY

There is no problem in understanding that we are all born once — physically. But to speak of being born more times than that causes us to ask with Nicodemus, "How can this thing be?" Nicodemus was right, of course, in that we cannot come back to be born twice — unless you believe in reincarnation, and this ancient concept is being reexamined in theological circles today. I talked with a fellow one evening who insisted he had directed a great orchestra in Milan in the 15th Century. But one thing is clear: no one of us can relive this present existence.

George Bernard Shaw once asked who he would like to be if he could come back, and he replied, "The man Bernard Shaw might have been." In some ways we all feel this way, especially if we could start life over knowing what we know now. Always we have to live where we are and as we are.

What a marvelous thing it is to be born and to grow into a person. How your life and mine could have evolved from microscopic organisms is almost beyond belief, and little wonder the ancient Biblical writer said, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made."

The first time I was stricken in my ministry, back in 1953, I was stunned. I couldn't understand how a Methodist clergyman could have a heart attack. I have been hospitalized six times, and I never cease to be amazed at the recuperative power of the human organism. How the body can renew and regenerate itself is one of God's greatest gifts. If I have learned one basic lesson from all of this it is: never take life for granted. Thank God each day for the privilege of being able to manage your

life, to talk, hear, taste, and for a sense of well being. It is a grand thing to be a live person, for there is only one other alternative.

II. MENTAL

Secondly, we are born mentally. Some people never are. They live entirely on the physical level and never rise above the pleasure principle. A reporter described a cruise ship voyage as a weekend of "carousing, drinking, dancing and playing for anything." He concluded by saying of the voyagers, "They returned as they had gone, lonely people." This would not be true, of course, of all who made the journey, but for too many people life is only a physical experience. The space between their ears remains empty, and yet we are told that the greatest discoveries of the next 25 years will be in inner space, not outer space — the inner space within the human head. The mental equipment that God has bestowed upon us is beyond description.

What mind power we have. I asked a psychiatrist friend what he found to be his major problem in counselling people. He replied, "The capacity of the human mind to deceive itself." But it also has the capacity to right itself, dream dreams and achieve the impossible.

Our achievements in space rest upon the genius primarily of Dr. Werner Von Braun. He tells of when he was a young student in Germany. He was failing physics. Werner disliked the subject as well as the professor. The professor called him in and said, "Werner, you think you are failing in physics. I want to tell you that you are not failing physics. You are failing the man you are going to become. Twenty years from now you will wish to draw upon some scientific fact and you will discover that you flunked yourself in an easy course in physics." The professor went on, "I know you do not like me, but I think you have a fine mind so I am going to spend an hour with you twice a week on physics so you will not flunk the man you might

become." Dr. Von Braun said that moment was his birth of science, of speculation and believing things could happen.

A lovely lady said to me recently, "I'm old but my mind is alive." How about your mind? It is astounding the number of college graduates who haven't read a book since they left college. Are you alive and alert to what is going on world-wide? Are you growing mentally?

III. SOCIAL

Next is social birth. You might call this the realization that "no man is an island unto himself," or the birth into life's usefulness. Dr. Albert Schweitzer passed a statue of an African and felt the call to serve in healing and working in Africa. He was born into caring about the needs of others. It is what Dr. Fritz Kunkel used to speak of as understanding the "we" relationship of life. Jesus did not pray, "My Father which art in heaven," but "*Our* Father. . ." For Jesus saw that the real person is not centered in the "I" but the "we" dimensions of life. He reached across the prejudice lines of his day.

We are just beginning to do this. Elmer Davis said once, "The greatest contribution made by western nations to civilization is the concept of the dignity of man." Christianity is a revolutionary faith in that it does not seek to unite men as workers, classes, Nordics or Kiwanians, but as brothers.

The deep need of our world today is social birth, an end to the senseless fighting and terrorism such as we have in the Middle East, and even among ourselves. We need people with the mind that was in Christ who will lift the standard of human relationships and promise peaceful association. This was Christ's measure of usefulness.

I think so often of Emmanuel Kant's principle of universality. He said each of us should ask of the self this question, "If everyone in the world was an exact duplicate of me in every respect, what kind of world would it be?" Be more specific. If every

American was exactly like you, would you want to live in America? What would happen to brotherhood, to the great character building organizations of the community, to the church, to our world-wide concern for others? It is a searching question that reveals the extent to which we think in the "we" rather than the "I" relationship. Have you experienced social birth?

IV. SPIRITUAL

Fourth is the birth Jesus spoke about to Nicodemus when he told the leader he must be born from above, or "born again." Another word for it would be spiritual awareness. As persons we live on three levels: physical, moral and insight. The physical we understand. The moral puts what Wooman called "a stop in the mind," and insight causes us to ask, "Ought I do this?" It relates to conscience and the values that make life.

Thomas Carlyle said, "Of all paths a man could strike into, there is, at any given moment, a best path for every man. This path, to find this path, and walk in it, is the one thing needful for him." This is what Jesus was trying to make clear to Nicodemus. We wish he had replied, "I see it, Lord," but he didn't. Do we see it? It is the summons to be born into what Christ intends your life to be — so we don't fail to become the man or woman we might be.

There is a best path for each of us, and many of us would say it is the Christian one. To be born spiritually in this sense is to live with a Christ-centered consciousness each day that makes a difference in the way we think, act, talk and believe. Nicodemus was on the edge of decision, but he missed the boat.

It was a dramatic moment when Louis XVI was dragged from Tuileries gardens into the Place de Guillotine where the French King was beheaded. Then Queen Marie Antoinette met the same fate. Next the mob brought the young Dauphin, heir to the French throne who would have become Louis XVII but never was. As they placed his head on the block a course

creature cried, "Let's give him to old Meg." She was the vilest woman in Paris. "Let her clothe him in rags, feed him on filth, teach him to lie, steal, swear; let old Meg damn his soul," cried the mobster. It caught the diabolical fancy of the crowd, and it was done. Old Meg taught the boy to do all of these unfortunate things.

It is said that every now and then when Old Meg would have the Dauphin speak or do something more vile than heretofore, the lad would clench his royal fists, stomp his foot and cry, "I will not say it, I WAS BORN TO BE A KING." He felt deep within he was born to be something more than he was.

We, too, were born to be kings of the spirit, for we are created in the image of God. We are born to proclaim the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the best way we can with our lives. For "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

YOUR SHORTEST BIOGRAPHY

There is an interesting verse in the last Book of the Old Testament, Malachi, "Then those who fear the Lord spoke with one another; the Lord heeded and heard them, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and thought on his name." The word feared, as used here, does not mean to be afraid, but to stand in awe and wonderment before the Lord. Thus a better translation would be to say, "Then those who stood in awe before the Lord spoke with one another."

The question Malachi kept hearing his stubborn audience repeat was, "Why is God treating us so badly?" It was the pious folk asking the question as the first stirrings of doubt lingered in their minds. The only people who seemed to prosper were the rugged individualists who had no regard for God or their neighbors. The situation sounds like it was written for today, for the pious are still asking, "Why is God treating us so badly?"

Malachi assures the people that God is aware of their difficulties, even if He does not immediately answer prayer or correct injustice. But, He keeps a careful record in heaven of those who serve Him. This belief, the Book of Heavenly Remembrance, contains the germ out of which one day would develop the idea of eternal life for the righteous.

Now, not many moderns conceive of God as a bookkeeper, as One who daily makes note of the checks and balances against your life and mine. But the thought is none the less intriguing—and if the good Lord was making note of your biography what would you want it to say?

It is said that in China, if you do not know who your ancestors were, you can select them. Someone says that the best thing to do with a family tree is to spray it. Basically, of course, the choice of ancestors is not one we are privileged to make. It is difficult to realize that each one of us had an ancestor living at the time of Jesus and even Moses.

We are the product of yesterdays, but the determiners of tomorrow. We do have the power to choose the kind of ancestors we will be. As you look at yourself today, what do you think will be remembered about you a hundred years from now? If there is a big Book of Heavenly Remembrance somewhere what kind of biographical sketch would you like it to contain? If you make the Who's Who of Heaven, what will it say about you?

There would be three things, among others, I would hope could be said about you and about me.

I. A KIND PERSON

Dr. Louis Leaky says that man has had to learn what has survival value, "that during 99 percent of his time on earth violent ways came easily to man, because they were of survival value." He points out it is easier to be a murderer than a peace-maker, a person who hates rather than loves. But now we have to do an about face and become nonviolent. We must determine that we do not want to destroy ourselves. This is difficult in a world that still lives by the Old Testament code of "an eye for an eye."

"Put on Christ" said Paul, for he was sure this would make one feel different. And one of the virtues in putting on Christ is it imprints the stamp of kindness upon your life. The ultimate end of unkindness is destructive violence. So, we are talking here about something that has to do with man's survival on this planet.

We become unkind in so many little ways. Often it springs

from irritation. We all get irritated at times and feel like blowing a fuse. A kangaroo went to a psychiatrist because nothing made him feel jumpy. With us it's the other way around: we're too jumpy. I picked up a newspaper in Edmonton one time that was reporting the hassle in Calgary over the appointment of an American police chief, which didn't work out. The article referred to one individual who had gotten all steamed up over the issue, and it said he was "an exhibit of gracelessness under pressure." How often could that be said of us?

At other times unkindness springs from our being overly opinionated. Among the greatest tyrannies of mankind is opinionated people, individuals who always think they are right. I talked with a long-time friend in Canada, and I was surprised at how sharp he had become in his judgements. He had a strong conviction about everybody and everything, whether he knew what he was talking about or not. It is difficult to be fair minded, to keep a sense of balance. We need to remember that not all of the right or wrong is on one side or the other.

I come back to that word of Martin, Abbott of Dumes, spoken 1400 years ago, "See that thou despise not the brother that stands by thee: for thou knowest not whether the spirit of God be in thee or in him." It is well worth remembering, for the absolute conviction on someone's part that he is right about everything is humanity's most dangerous disease. Someone says the four most important words are, "What is your opinion?" Indeed!

Then there is the unkindness that stems from gossip. There are many persons who qualify as Typhoid Marys, and every sociologist and health authority remembers Chicago's Typhoid Mary. She was a walking hive of typhoid germs. Not sick herself, she made everyone else sick. Life is full of Typhoid Marys. In the halls of business, at social functions, even in church, you will find people who go from water cooler to water cooler spreading germs of fear, mistrust and hate on all within breathing distance.

At one point in his life, Charles McCabe, who became known as the singing Chaplain, lay dying with typhoid in Libby Prison. He was imprisoned for breaking the rules of his company during the Civil War. In prison, when he became desperately ill, 250 Methodist preachers of his conference prayed for him and wrote a letter. Said McCabe, "I could endure loneliness without tears. I was used to suffering, but not used to tenderness, and that broke me down." It had the effect of healing McCabe and later he became a bishop.

He wasn't used to tenderness, and our world isn't either. But, what a great thing it is when you meet someone who has "Put on Christ" and is a kind person. What does your biography, your Book of Heavenly Remembrance, say about you at this point?

II. A GENEROUS PERSON

What a stirring thing it would be to have written into that Book that each of us was a generous person. It is said that Winston Churchill was great because he cared. You contrast a spirit of this magnitude with Hetty Green who had \$100 million and was known as "The Witch of Wall Street," the stingiest woman who ever lived. She was ruthless in business and lived like a pauper even though her income was \$5,000 a day. She lived in cheap rooming houses and constantly changed her name to avoid paying taxes. Hetty's stinginess cost her son, Ned, a leg. He smashed a kneecap at 14 while sledding. After treating the leg unsuccessfully herself she got him admitted as a charity patient in Bellevue Hospital. Upon learning that Mrs. Green was one of the richest of women, the hospital demanded payment, so she took her son out and eventually the leg had to be amputated. The same week she arranged to lend the city of New York \$4½ million, she demanded a receipt for a 5 cent trolley fare. She would buy three newspapers every day to read the financial pages and then send her son out to resell the

papers. Hetty had a stroke in 1916, and Ned had to disguise as seamstresses the nurses he had hired. When she died, she was buried in a plain coffin.

Dr. David Mace says that finances always are at the head of the list of family problems and that "Christian people should have a fear of money. It can corrupt and soften, as well as do good. We must possess our possessions so as not to be possessed by them." In the Bible there are some 500 Biblical references to prayer, less than 500 to faith, but over 1,000 to money and material possessions. Sixteen of the 38 Parables of Jesus were concerned with the way a man handles his money and property. He said, "Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." Our modern emphasis is upon Caesar. As someone puts it, "Many people will stop at nothing to give."

Philip Guedalla, one of the best known biographers, said that the problem is to find out what a person is really like. He points out that it is easy to discover where a fellow went, whom he knew and what he did. Guedalla was preparing a manuscript on the Duke of Wellington and wanted to give a correct picture of him. Where do you suppose he found it? He found the evidence he wanted in the stubs from an old check book. What tells more about a man than what he spends his money for? Here's where you read his shortest biography.

Ann Landers quoted a letter from a distraught wife who was complaining that her husband spends \$35 for liquor every week, and they hardly had enough to eat. What does that immediately tell you about the fellow? If someone checked your check stubs today, what would they tell about your interest in noble causes, social uplift, medical research, the church? What would it reveal about the depth of your caring? Here's where you discover how far a fellow's faith gets into him. Each of us can profess all the pious Christianity he wants to, and quote Scripture by the yard, but if one really wants to know whether Christ has transformed

us, all they have to do is look at our check stubs. That gives your biography. It is said our consecration must be big enough for the world's anguish. The question is: is it?

Money sure isn't everything, but my, the glorious things that one can do with it when he "Puts on Christ," and catches a vision of what it means to give. I would like to have attached to my biography in that Book of Heavenly Remembrance Malachi talked about, that I was a generous person.

III. A FAITH PERSON

Then, etched somewhere into the pages of that Book I would like to have it said that I was a faith person. I mean here something more than even religious faith — a point of view toward life that sees man as having awareness, some consciousness of right or wrong, an in-bred certainty that the universe is weighted on the side of truth and goodness. It is the hopeful perspective that feels the stubborn ounces of your weight. This is something distinct from dogmas and doctrines in the religious sense. The tragedy is that when young people and adults throw out their religious faith they snuff out their hopefulness too. This can lead to violence and destruction, as it so often does.

Someone asked me recently, "Why all this concern about violence in the movies? Hasn't there always been violence, even in the Bible?" Indeed, but what we are getting today in film violence is three major themes: disillusionment with ourselves, frustration with our society, and a sense of hopelessness.

We need the "great hopes that make us men," to use Tennyson's phrase. This is the marvelous thing that Jesus did for people. As Savior, He saved them from their despair and loss of faith in themselves and their tomorrows. Gilbert Highet reminds us that "there are men who express the age in which they are educated, but who, by the intensity of their imagination, the sweep of their knowledge, rise above their era so that they

inhabit both time and eternity at once.” This amazing Galilean did this and at His birth the angels cried, “Joy To the World, The Lord is Come!” This joy was to be found in His kindness, His generosity, in the hope He revived in the soul of man.

Josiah Royce gave us a depth definition of faith. He said, “It is the discovery of an inner reality that enables you to withstand anything the universe can do to you.” Paul said, “Put on Christ.” My, to discover that inner reality really sets you on your feet and renews within you a hopeful perspective.

The greatest thing that one person ever does for another is to give him a faith that endures through thick and thin, and hope. A beaten down old fellow went in to see Dr. Fosdick one day and came out of his study beaming. Through his smile the obviously rejuvenated gentleman said, “He put the stars back in my sky.” This is the great thing that Jesus does for each of us. He gives us the faith to keep going and the hopeful certainty that the universe is weighted on the side of truth and goodness.

So Malachi assured the people that God was aware of their difficulties, even if He did not immediately answer prayer or correct injustice. But one thing was sure: God could be trusted. If you believe that then nothing can rob you of your hope.

I don’t know whether there is a Book of Heavenly Remembrance, such as Malachi mentioned, and I suspect he was using a figure of speech, but if there is such a record somewhere in that world of larger dimensions, I would hope my biographical sketch would say three things at least: that I was a kind person, a generous person, a faith person.

GIVE ME A TOMORROW

On New Year's Eve in Korea, it was 42 below zero on the battle line. Eighteen thousand American Marines were facing one hundred thousand Communist troops. Every Marine knew the odds for his survival. A midnight supper was served — cold beans to be eaten beside their tanks. A correspondent noticed a big fellow whose clothing had frozen hard as a board, and his beard was encrusted with mud. He was eating his beans with a trench knife at 42 below.

The correspondent became philosophical and said to the Marine, "If I were God and could give you one thing you'd rather have more than anything else in the world, what would it be?" The Marine thought a few moments and said, "I would ask you to give me a tomorrow." I have a suspicion that this is the deep desire of each of us — a tomorrow.

I remember a conversation with a lovely lady who was dying. She knew it, and we talked quietly about life, its transitions and the yet to be in that world of larger dimensions. She said, "It's hard to die when you want to live." Of course it is, for above all we want a tomorrow, and we want to live it with vitality, health and strength. So, the years slip by into the eternities and we change in many ways, but always we want the assurance that tomorrow will come.

I once read a sermon by a preacher friend where he spoke eloquently about life. He pointed out that right in the middle of that word is the word *IF*, and when you think about it there is a great big *IF* in life. If I do this then so and so happens. If I do that then this will be the result. So obviously our tomorrows

are shaped by the decisions, actions, attitudes we reflect today. If we want that tomorrow we hope for, then we need to look carefully at the here and now of our existence, because before you can have tomorrow you have to live through today.

The Apostle Paul discovered the secret of this. He lived dynamically and dangerously for Christ. You find his motivation in these words, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." He pressed on, stayed with it because he had a compelling objective in life — to attain that quality of soul that comes when life is committed to God through Christ.

What is this "upward call of God," this quality of soul and how do we get it?

I. WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST TREASURE

What do you value above everything? What is your greatest treasure?

An air raid warden during World War II rushed into a London home during the bombings and said, "You have two minutes to take what you value most and get out." What would you have selected? The television set? Refrigerator? Electric cooker? This family took the family album because of its treasure of memories.

Another way to ask this would be, what do you see to be the highest good? Some would say, "pleasure." If one wants to remain an adolescent then live with that philosophy. But, when you say, "give me tomorrow" it may hold a surprise as to what one gets.

Others see power, or fame as life's great treasure. Others would select wealth, popularity or social position as their chief goal. But in the Parables of the Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price, Jesus gives a direct answer to what is the highest good: THE KINGDOM OF GOD. This is what Paul found. And, in

plain English, what does it mean? It means the reign of God and the reign of love in the life of the individual and society.

In Toledo, Spain there is to be seen the Church of the Chains. One wall is completely covered with the chains that held people prisoner in bygone days, and they hang there as a symbol of people set free. Christ came to set us free from the greatest of tyrannies — ourselves, to free us from life — destroying habits and unworthy goals. He said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." So, the reign of God and of love should be our prime goals, our greatest treasure. Why?

II. WHAT YOU TREASURE REVEALS YOUR CHARACTER

"Give me a tomorrow" is a way of saying, "give me life." Victor Hugo said, "I want more of it when I die." But have we attained a quality of life that is worth preserving eternally? The Kingdom of God, the reign of God and of love, represents the highest possible quest because it satisfies a deeper need in life than anything else can. Christian character does not so much influence what we have as what we are.

There was a news story about a fellow in London who hated his face so much he couldn't stand to look at it. As a youngster he gained the impression he was effeminate and that this caused people to look at his face with contempt. At 12 years he became extremely self-conscious and at 18 he couldn't stand his reflection in the mirror. At 22 he left work, took refuge in a room in his parent's home and would talk only with a hood over his face.

Many cure techniques were tried, and then the fellow was enticed into a television tape interview. The videotape was shown to him greatly out of focus and the light reduced. It was done 17 times until the picture was brought into focus and he could look at himself. He said, "When I could stand myself, I recovered." The one person we have to be able to stand is ourselves.

Rabbi Edgar Magnin has served Wilshire Temple in Los Angeles for over 50 years. In a newspaper interview he caught the essence of what I feel the church should do. He said it is the "function of the church or synagogue to make people think and to feel, to increase their sensibilities, their sensitivities, so they feel kinder toward the world. This is so they can face life like it is, with its virtues and faults, to retain hope and yet be clear-eyed to see the dark side too." Said the Rabbi, "The biggest sin today is stupidity and a lack of character, whether it results in corruption or an evident lack of principles. You have got to combine brain with heart."

I see this stupidity and lack of character so realistically when I ride the police cars a few times each month. We arrested a woman one evening who was creating a disturbance in a public place. She was loud mouthed with foul language, drunk and had drugs in her possession. As we rode to the jail she turned to me and said, "I hope you had a nice mother like me." It was funny, but pathetic.

One of the most dramatic experiences of my ministry came very late one Sunday night. Our doorbell rang, and I made my way sleepily to the door. I opened it, and there was a woman dressed in black with her finger on the trigger of a gun she was holding in her open purse. I woke up very quickly. She looked at me and said, "What I have to say can't wait until morning." I thought to myself that the sermon must have been worse than I thought it was. She then said, "Can I come in?" Looking at the gun I wasn't about to say no. As she came in she said, "I'm going to kill myself." I replied, "For goodness sakes don't do it here in the living room. My wife just cleaned house today. Let's go in the kitchen." That was a foolish thing to say but it was all I could think of to stall for time. She followed me to the kitchen, and we sat down at the kitchen table. She kept her finger on the trigger for about forty-five minutes. As I listened

to her story I found it was utterly stupid. She was so mixed up the story made no sense, and she didn't have the strength of character to deal with it. It took three years of counselling to get to the point where she could stand herself.

So many people have nothing splendid in their lives that commands them, or stirs their souls. The more we have in us the mind that was in Christ, the kinder we feel toward the world, toward other persons, the more hope we have, then deeper becomes this quality we call character. What is it you and I treasure the most today? The answer we give reveals something of our character or lack of it.

III. THE BEST IS WITHIN REACH

This is why Paul pressed on. He believed one could attain the quality of soul that makes the reign of God and His love real. It means to be God-centered, not self-centered. Someone says it doesn't take much of a man to be Christian but it takes all there is of him. I recall a word that stabbed my mind, "If you were arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you?" There's a sledge-hammer question that should jar us on our heels!

If what we treasure reveals our character then we ought to get hold of the best, the best that is within reach. I know of no one who has the cleansing, redemptive, life-uplifting, power of Christ. If saying, "give me a tomorrow" means give me life, then here is the One who really gives it. He makes clear that the reign of God and of love in your life and mine satisfies the deeper need of our lives more than anything else can. It is a way that makes for right decisions, decent living, tenderness in human relationships and caring about what happens to people.

Freud said once that the chief duty of a human being is to endure life. There is wisdom there. But Jesus went beyond that and enabled us to see that the chief duty of a human being is to

BECOME VICTORIOUS over life, to master it and achieve a quality of life that is worth saving for the tomorrows.

Solzhenetsyn, one of our most prophetic writers, told a New York gathering that only once during his long imprisonment in a Soviet Labor Camp did he become so discouraged he contemplated suicide. He was outdoors on a work detail and didn't care whether the guards killed him or not. During a break he sat down and a stranger sat beside him, someone he had never seen before and never saw again. For no explainable reason this stranger took a stick and drew a cross on the ground. Solzhenetsyn sat and stared at the cross and said, "I realized therein lies man's freedom." At that point he received new courage and the will to live and work.

Through Christ commitment, through that strange cross, comes our freedom to be really free. Paul saw this and exclaimed, "I press on toward . . . the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Here is the best. Here is life's greatest treasure — the reign of God and love through Christ our Lord in your life and mine.

When you have that you are ready for whatever tomorrow God gives you!

Shortly after preaching this sermon, "Give Me A Tomorrow," Dr. Carlson was stricken with a major heart attack. He subsequently underwent open heart surgery and was hospitalized for three months. Little did we know that his topic would be so timely as he struggled to survive his sixth heart attack. God saw fit to give him many more tomorrows. He lived for five more years, which was considered a miracle by his team of physicians.

CHAPTER IV



Looking at Jesus Through Contemporary Eyes

WHAT STRANGE MAN IS THIS?

Several years ago, when trouble was brewing in the coal industry, a Los Angeles newspaper carried an account of the threatened crisis and headlined the story, "Miners May Kill Santa Claus." The implication was, of course, that a strike coming in the midst of the Christmas shopping season would paralyze the business life of the country.

It struck me that these words somewhat symbolized our times, for never has a generation seen so many good things destroyed, mutilated or distorted by evil. Our world has been shaken to its foundations in many ways.

The writer of the Gospel of Hebrews lived in an age not unlike our own. His world, too, had been shaken. The Roman Empire had undertaken to form nations, races, religions and economies into an artificial union before men were ready for the "one world" idea. Confusion was at the helm, and the writer had ringing in his memory the ruins of Jerusalem and the desolation that had been wrought throughout the Holy Land. It was a world in which the moral, ethical and spiritual man was not yet in control. In the 2nd Chapter of Hebrews the writer gives us this thought-provoking word, "As it is, we do not yet see all things controlled by man; what we do see is Jesus."

Today, these 2,000 years later, we would have to say that man is still far removed from an intelligent, ethical control of his world or his environment. We have a long way to go before the society we dream about will exist. But the writer of Hebrews saw one positive hope which kept his spirit at a high level. He said, "What we do see is Jesus." And so with us. Irrespective of

all the problems that crowd in upon us, "What we do see is Jesus." For that which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions is the personality of its founder.

Hinduism is loyalty to an idea; Confucianism is loyalty to a tradition; Shintoism is loyalty to a country; and Islam is loyalty to a code. Christianity is loyalty to a person. You may think of Christianity without creed, without ritual, without churches, but you cannot think of it without Christ.

Bruce Barton once wrote a book with the title, "The Man Nobody Knows," and he was, of course, speaking of Jesus. The title is significant even for today, for though we speak much about this Galilean I wonder how well we really know Him. We become so engrossed in theological dialogue and dogma that we almost lose sight of the sustaining power of the Christian life.

There is a widespread tendency today, among theologians as well as laymen, to reduce Jesus to the status of a good man who died for a cause, and not a very successful one at that.

The danger is that we will lose sight of this strange man who has inspired our culture and the dream for a Christian civilization. Albert Schweitzer said, "I wonder whether today we must not proclaim the uniqueness of Christ and His incomparable importance." The cry of the Greeks is still our need, "Sir, we would see Jesus." This is our need today — to see the uniqueness of Christ. What strange man is this?

I. JESUS ACTUALLY LIVED

It can be said that Jesus actually lived though we know little about the details of His life. Carlyle said once, "Great men have short biographies." This is true of Christ. He left no record, wrote no book, kept no diary. All we know about Him is crowded into a few pages of the New Testament. This does not give us a photograph of Jesus, but four interpretations, four reflections by men who knew Him.

Yet we can be certain He lived. It may sound strange to say this, when we have taken it for granted since our childhood, but let me remind you that for 200 years the early Christian community was split on the question of whether or not Jesus was a man, who lived on this earth as a human being. One group insisted He only appeared to live. The outcome of this controversy was the conclusion expressed in the Apostle's Creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ. . . born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried," an emphasis upon the physical aspects of Christ's experience. In the middle of the 19th Century this conclusion was challenged again, and in our own lifetime we heard Hitler speak of Jesus as a myth. There are those who still believe it.

There is not a reputable historian, philosopher or archaeologist who would not say with certainty, "Jesus actually lived." To deny this fact of history is as intelligent as to deny the existence of Abe Lincoln.

Still, who is this strange man who became the centerpoint of human history? He was born somewhere between 7 and 4 B.C. No historian has Jesus born in the year zero. Roman records reveal that Herod died in 4 B.C. and we know Jesus was alive at that time. He died somewhere between 30 and 32 A.D., and His public ministry extended over a period of one and one half to three years. He grew up in a sheltered mountain village, among commonplace folk, and had four brothers and two sisters. He attended a synagogue school and was confirmed at the age of twelve.

He grew up a normal youngster and attended to such chores as filling lamps and trimming wicks. He knew what housecleaning involved and how to build a fire and tend sheep. When Joseph died, Jesus, as eldest son, became head of the family. All the while a fire burned within Him. He was harnessed to caring for the family, but He was aware of a divine mission.

Then came His baptism, told in poetic language to describe a wonderful inner experience. Then He preached and taught the multitudes.

II. NO CREDENTIAL BUT HIMSELF

He never owned a home and had no credential but Himself. After a hectic public ministry that won multitudes of friends and created hosts of enemies, Jesus was crucified. His executioners gambled for his only piece of property, and He was laid in a borrowed grave. He never traveled more than 200 miles from His birthplace, but today, nearly 2,000 years later, He is the centerpoint of human history. Even history is dated from His coming into the world.

It has been pointed out that of all the armies, navies, parliaments, rulers, kings and leaders who have ruled the world, none has affected the life of man on this earth as powerfully as this one solitary life.

You cannot stand in His presence very long without asking, "Who was He?" All agree He was a great man — some say He was the son of God. Others proclaim He was ultimate truth. Matthew saw Him as a teacher, Mark as a conqueror, Luke as a physician, and John as the light of the world.

More books have been written about Him and in interpretation of His mind than any other subject. The world's greatest music, most noble art, supreme literature, most glorious cathedrals have been produced in adoration of this humble Galilean.

It began with the birth of a babe in an obscure setting. Some have said it was a stable, others a manger in an inn, and still others a cave in a hillside. Whatever the details, those who confronted Him came to the fundamental conclusion that God broke through into history and for thirty-two years walked this earth. The heart of His message was to exalt a God of righteous love, Who is at work in this world reconciling man unto Himself. So magnificent was He that the Centurion ultimately stood

at the foot of His cross and cried, "Truly this was the son of God."

One may believe many things about this strange man, but it is difficult to understand Him apart from His divinity. Perhaps it can be said that what He said and the things that He did are not as important as who He was. The lame, the halt, the weary, the oppressed, the sick and the heartsick who stood in His presence, again and again had the conviction they had had a meeting with God Himself.

From that day to this mankind has been drawn to this Galilean for His uniqueness. He never went to college and had no formal education. He had no newspaper to herald His mass meetings, no Time Magazine to give Him the front cover story. There was no army to fight for Him, no Madison Avenue Advertising Agency to promote His public image. He never ran for public office and never played politics. The world was much the same at His death as at His birth, but it has never been the same since. Should the President of the United States walk into a room we would all rise. Should Jesus of Nazareth walk through the door we would all kneel. He stands as unique among men, and no man who preceded Him, nor any who has followed Him has ever been quite like Him. For as has been said, "He is the only somebody you can't match."

III. GOD AWARENESS

"For what we do see is Jesus."

You see this uniqueness in His God-consciousness. He was God-possessed. From His earliest days, as a lad 12 years of age, He said, "I must be about my Father's business"... and He was. He never argued the existence of God with anybody. He did not engage in theological discussion as to the nature of God. He prayed, "Our Father" and meant it. God was not a definition, a theory or a hypothesis. He was as close as breathing, as anxious about one gone astray as a prodigal's father, as forgiving

as 70 times 7. Jesus dealt with every crisis situation from the centerpoint of God. We know more about His prayer life than any other quality of His being. He did not know how to doubt and He was without hate.

You see this as you follow this strange man from the cradle to young manhood. Walk with Him through Galilee, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Samaria, Ephraim, Sidon, Decapolis. You excite with Him at His reception, and agonize with Him at the hatred of the Pharisees and Saducees. He saw the clouds gathering about Him, the plot thickening, but at no time did He strike out, succumb to fear or curse those who spitefully used Him.

Your heart goes numb as you see Him thrust into the Temple courtyard with the crown of thorns pressed deeply into the skull, His back severely cut and bruised from the lash, His robe dishevelled and torn from mauling. But, He stands strong and with courage, and the record says simply, "He held His peace." You look at the agony, the suffering. He stands alone, deserted by His closest friends, weary and ready to die. Yet He commands the scene and you ask, "What strange man is this?" And all you can say is, "What we do see is Jesus."

The cross goes up on Golgatha, with the nails tearing at the flesh and the pains scorching every nerve and muscle. Yet, through all of this, there is no ranting or raving. Then, out of the crowd comes a bent-over, hate-filled old man. He looks up at the cross and cries, "If you're Jesus of Nazareth, I dare you to come down from the cross." My, what a challenge!

I have often wondered what would have happened if this amazing man had accepted it! Suppose, having endured all of this with such splendor of spirit, He finally had had it — and looked down at the old man and the curious crowd and said, "So you think I can't come down from the cross. Alright, mister, I'll show you." And at that point He pulled one arm loose and wiped the blood upon His breast — as terror gripped the crowd.

The old man slipped quickly back into the crowd as someone screamed, "Look! Look! He's coming down!"

Silently, Jesus yanked the other arm free, shaking the blood from the hand. Then He tugged at the legs — and the onlookers began to panic. The screaming echoed across Golgatha into the city, "He's down! He's down!"

Then, see the Galilean as he scans the crowd, turns away and with bitterness dripping from his lips, cries, "You thought I couldn't come down, but I did. If that's all the difference what I have said and done has made to you, I'm through. I'm through with you! I'm through forever!" And the eyes of the stunned multitude follow Him into the distance as the haunting words drift back over the hill, "I'm through with you forever."

But Jesus of Nazareth didn't come down from the cross. Because of the way He died, He still lives, and the open tomb is the symbol of our faith.

Still, to this day when the way is dark and the road is hard and the going tough, men and women stand before that cross of Golgatha and look and look and look. And they ask, "What strange man is this?" Then they turn away toward that open tomb and face life with new hope and transformed spirits as they answer, "As it is, we do not yet see all things controlled by man; what we do see is Jesus."

WAYS IN WHICH CHRIST WAS DIFFERENT

William James said once, "There isn't much difference between men, but what difference there is makes the difference." Jesus was different. Some would say because of His death and resurrection, and others would say his teachings made Him different. I would add several other factors:

I. MORAL PERFECTION

A. We see the difference in the Galilean's moral perfection. There is no evidence that He ever sinned. Read the writings of such followers of Christ as Paul, Augustine, Francis of Assisi and there are expressions of guilt for having sinned from all of them. Paul said, "When I would do good then evil is present with me." There is no evidence of unworthiness in the statements of Jesus. He never depreciated Himself, never felt alienation from God. He lived a blameless life and never sought forgiveness for Himself, though He gave it to others. Procula said to Pilate, "Have nothing to do with this just man." Judas cried out, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood."

B. Likewise, you see Jesus' difference in His compassion. I think it can be said that the memory the Disciples carried with them above all others was this Galilean's deep concern. He always had time for people. Dr. Harry Haines asked this searching question one time, "Is the problem too many people or too little humanity?"

I was at a banquet occasion and Mervin LeRoy, one of the great movie directors of all time, told of the book he has written about the movie industry titled, "Take One." The book stores are having a problem because that is exactly what people do—

take one, without paying. Mr. LeRoy said this, "It is hard to find writers with heart, warmth and compassion. This was the genius of Jesus. As Joseph Sizoo said, "He dragged the sorrows of His generation across His soul."

At midnight He could be involved with a Hebrew scholar, at daybreak with fishermen telling them where to drop their nets. At noonday it was a heartsick girl at the well, and in the afternoon a tax collector hanging in a tree. Day and night there was a procession of the lame, the blind and sick. They went away healed. What is so amazing is that Jesus cared so deeply about people for whom no one cared. He loved individuals no one loved. There is nothing tougher in Christianity than to love someone you don't like. Christ shed tears for those others had forgotten. He gave a new chance to people imprisoned within themselves.

The Disciples, those closest to Jesus, knew He was different, but they were not certain why. One thought He was Moses returned to life. Others thought He was Elijah. Still others were certain it was John The Baptist alive again. And then Peter proclaimed, "Thou art the Christ."

If He was a man of moral perfection, compassion and a man of sorrows, He was also a man of joy. A fellow who goes around with a long face doesn't do much to excite the children or attract a following. He is quoted as saying, "Be of good cheer," and I am sure Jesus must have said it hundreds of times during His brief ministry.

II. HIS TEACHINGS

Let's carry this difference we see in Jesus a step further. It is in His teachings. He is the greatest teacher of ethical religion the world has ever known. As Allan Walker expressed it, "He is the freest man who ever lived." He gave us a way of life by living it Himself, and you cannot distinguish His teachings from His life. They melt together.

It is a way that demands disciplined living. Robert Morrison of Glasgow once said, "The great word in the drift of life is may; the great word in the life of Christ is must, and must is the last triumph of the will." It means one cannot play both ends against the middle, but his faith must make a difference in the way he lives, thinks and acts. This is tough in a world like this.

An irate subscriber stormed into a newspaper office and complained because his name was in the obituary column. He demanded a retraction. The young reporter who made the mistake said, "I never retract a story, but I'll put you in tomorrow's birth column and give you a fresh start." The Gospel of Jesus has often been called the Gospel of the fresh start for always it confronts us with new beginnings, the challenge to be finer than we are, the invitation to be transformed on the inside.

Here are a few of the words that made the Galilean different:

A. Anyone who exalts Himself will be humbled, but one who humbles himself will be exalted.

That's a strange word in a society that clamors for self-expression and charm schools devoted to building up personal ego. I'm not sure we hear the word humbleness anywhere in our society anymore except in church. I was at an affair involving the key business leadership of Los Angeles and sat at a table with several top executives whose names you would recognize because of their prominence in the business community. One man in speaking about the pressures and intense problems of the moment said, "It's a dog-eat-dog world."

That's too bad if it is true in every level of society. For it robs us of our humaneness and any sense of humbleness. A reason many people never do understand the Christian faith is because their egos stand in their way.

As the fellow spoke I thought of that wonderful story of some years ago when the NBC Symphony played on Sunday afternoon. A farmer in western Montana wrote to New York and asked, "Next Sunday during the concert will you have the

pianist sound A three times on the piano so I can tune my violin?" He indicated that for several months of the winter his family was snowed in and isolated and their only entertainment was his violin and the radio. When I told this story several years ago a fellow came up at the close of the service, said he was from Montana, that he was a personal friend of that farmer. His violin had gotten out of tune hence the request. So, the next Sunday all America listened while the announcer told the story and the pianist sounded A on the piano so the farmer could tune up. I couldn't help think what a wonderful thing that was, that one individual was so significant a whole nation could listen while he tuned his violin. This is the way Jesus saw persons. Pray God we will never lose the virtue of humility out of our personal or national life.

B. Anyone who aims to preserve his own self will lose his soul, but anyone who loses himself in the cause of the Gospel will find himself.

In other words, if an individual is self-centered and concerned only about himself life becomes frustrating. But if he really knows how to identify with and take other persons into his life it becomes meaningful. This is hard talk for individuals whose primary motivation is, "What can I get out of it for myself?" Dr. Karen Horney speaks of the neurotic character or personality of our civilization. It is a strange thing to say that we find life by losing it in something outside the self, but the great benefactors of mankind would say, "It's true. It works that way." You have to get yourself off your hands to really live. As a fellow who went to the Antarctic for government service said, "The trouble with my life is there's been too much of me in it."

C. As a man sows, so does he reap. This is not true because Jesus said it. He said it because it's true. Life gives back to us exactly what we give life. That's the way it is.

Laurence Houseman's moving play "Bethlehem" was being

presented in one of London's great halls one year. At one point all the house lights go out except for a spotlight centered on the manger scene. A stagehand made a mistake and pulled the wrong handle thus plunging the entire hall into complete darkness. An angry voice was heard to cry out backstage "Hey! You switched off Jesus." The world has tried to do this in every generation. Still, this man who was different has survived through wars, terror and just plain human cussedness. Much of the worldwide difficulty we are experiencing now is our reward, and an eternal testimony to the truth of what Jesus said, "As a man — as a nation — as a world — sows, so does it reap." A world of hunger, chaos, insecurity is not what we expected after pouring billions of dollars into military expenditures and the arming of nations around the globe, but it is a part of the result of our failure to be as concerned for food production and the economic development of underprivileged peoples. The problem is not a simple one, but the results we are experiencing are not happy ones. As we sow we reap, and there is no escape from this universal principle.

Jesus is God's effort to change man for He believed we are worth changing. And we worship, not simply a good man, but a Savior, a Redeemer, the Savior of the world. You cannot squeeze Him within the limits of denominational book ends for He is many things to many people. He is beyond history, yet He is in it.

To Dante He was a Redeemer. To Shelley Christ was a poet. Ruskin saw Him as the Master of all things. To Paul He was the risen Christ. When He was born men came from the east. Since then they have come from the west, and in Him there is no east or west, for He said, "If I be lifted up from the earth I will draw all men unto me." And He does. So, the vital question today is, "How do you see Him?"

His followers have lived through Hebrew, Greek, Feudal

and Modern cultures. St. Augustine was inspired to write, "The Holy City." St. Francis found Him in poverty and the song of the birds. John Huss sang out the glory of His name while the flames crackled about his feet. Yes, from Paul to Albert Schweitzer multitudes have looked upon the face of this different man of the cross and the open tomb and cried, "My Lord and My God."

In Jerusalem one morning I stood alone in the tomb where this different man was buried. It was a strange feeling, and I did not feel alone. I said to myself, "It is an open tomb." This is the mystery! There is something about Jesus you cannot explain logically, for He puts into the soul dreams you never had, and when you really see Him He pulls at you to rise up with those of the centuries who exclaimed, "...We do not yet see all things controlled by man; what we do see is Jesus."

CHAPTER V



Modern Man and the Bible

UNLOCKING YOUR INNER DOOR TO GREAT LIVING

It was a great moment for me when I stood before the tomb of the remarkable David in Jerusalem. An old Rabbi stood there before the tomb reciting in Hebrew passages from the Psalms of David. For me it was a moment when history came alive, and it was a great one, because from my earliest Sunday school days David has been one of my heroes. When I was in the junior department of a Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg I won a prize for writing the best story concerning David. As I recall it was a free ticket to see the 4th chapter of the serial Marie Walcamp in "The Dragon's Net."

Let's go back to the old story of David and Goliath to see if we can extract something more from it that may be relevant to your life and mine.

I refer to this because we, too, are called upon to face giant problems nine feet tall. There are Goliaths that challenge each of us in our day. What kind of a man or woman does it require to make it in our times? Let me suggest two basic things:

I. ONE WHO FACES LIFE WITH HIS REAL SELF

You remember that when David went to King Saul he outfitted the young man in his armour. Talk about being overdressed. David clanked around in the king's paraphernalia until he could scarcely move. Finally, he threw off all the heavy things, and went out to face Goliath on his own terms with his real self. That's the best way to meet the problems of life — with your real self.

An 11-year-old boy came in to talk with me who had been having problems at home and had run away three times. He

was in a high state of rebellion and felt that his parents were overly authoritarian, and the complaint was he had to do everything their way. Obviously the picture was overdrawn and not quite as severe as he painted it. After we had chatted for an hour I asked if this had been helpful and the lad replied, "Yes, you listen to me like I'm real." Here was the heart of the boy's struggle. He was trying to be real and wanted to be treated as though he was a real person. It isn't easy to be real.

So many of us walk with a wall around ourselves. We don't let anyone get through. Still, each of us readily recognizes when someone is real. They are marked by a spirit that makes them unafraid of life's Goliaths. I want to share six steps that make for this kind of reality:

1. You accept your sex — the fact of being a man or a woman. This is a strange thing to suggest, but our times call for it. Multitudes of women wish they were men, and men wish they were women. Some parade around in the clothes of the opposite sex, and some even try to make the switch through surgery. The first step to being real is to accept who you are.

2. Accept your parents — see them as human beings with emotions, likes, dislikes, frustrations, and victories such as yours. Parents have their feelings and failures, psychological make-up, strengths and weaknesses just as you do. Sometimes a young person wishes he had different parents. If you are going to be a real person you accept what and who you have, and accept them as persons.

This likewise applies to parents — to accept their children even if they do not fit into the fine pattern you dream of. I remember a family that wanted a daughter so badly they dressed the son in girl's clothing until age eight. You can imagine what this would do to a youngster's mind and sense of self-worth.

Love is acceptance. Someone says that Jesus didn't come to

make us religious, but to help us feel at home in our own bodies and the universe and to help us face our hangups.

3. Accept the fact that life will not always be kind to you. Several years ago a young fellow crashed his plane into a church in Texas. He said he couldn't live in a world where things were not like he thought they ought to be. He had never discovered reality. Not everyone will love you, make a fuss over you or agree with everything you do. You will often be the victim of unfair criticism and circumstances you did not create. It is impossible for you and me to come through favorably to everyone.

I remember a *Gunsmoke* episode in which the "bad guys" shot the mule of an old hermit woman. In anguish she bent over the hurt animal and cried, "She's the only thing that loved me because I was me." Not everyone accepts you or me as we are and so life gives us some jolts. If you can accept the reality that sometime persons are going to hurt you, it keeps you from turning sour when it happens.

4. Accept the need for relatedness. A fellow was asked, "Do you get up grouchy?" He replied, "No, I let her sleep until 10 o'clock every morning." Love and good relationships are vital in the prevention of disease. Dr. John Cassel, of the University of North Carolina, believes that the "absence of strong, positive social support for their behavior is the true explanation for the much higher incidence of infant mortality and diseases of all kinds among ghetto dwellers." Dr. Cassel makes clear the need for warm human relationships if one is to develop normally. We are not made for isolation.

5. Accept responsibility — for the degree to which we act responsibly is that to which we are real, healthy persons. When you give your word that you will do something make good on it. Be dependable, and don't let other persons push you around

or manage your life. To be responsible is to be in control of yourself.

6. Another important element in facing life with your real self is to see something worthwhile in what you are doing. Paul saw it as pressing on toward the mark of a sense of high calling.

Two lines from the Indian poet Sir Rabindranath Tagore sound the warning, "The song that I came to sing remains unsung. . . I have spent my days in stringing and unstringing my instrument." No person can make use of his abilities by putting them in cold storage. It is so easy to let your life become like the fellow who sat at his cello playing the same note hour after hour. His patient wife asked why he didn't go up and down the scale the way other artists do and he said, "They're looking for the note, and I've found it."

So many people botch up their lives because they see so little that is worthwhile in their jobs. Or they lose sight of the significant part they play in sustaining our Republic. I've always liked that reference to Charles Brookfield who had the unusual experience of waking up one morning and reading his obituary in the newspaper. He was caught by one line, "Never a great actor, Charles Brookfield was invaluable in small parts." At first he resented it, and then came to appreciate what a significant tribute it was. This is the challenge to us — to be invaluable in the small part we play in life whatever that may be.

Had Judas died two years sooner, churches and colleges would today bear his name. Had Benedict Arnold passed out of the picture before his treachery he would be acclaimed. But somehow these fellows lost sight of their real selves and their lives got twisted. Or a prominent figure takes his life at the peak of his career and leaves a note saying, "I got bored with life."

You contrast these with a lovely Christian lady I know in another community. Eleven years ago there came a car accident, the amputation of a leg, and since then she has been confined

to a wheel chair. But did she turn sour? No, she had accepted the fact that life is not always kind. From her wheel chair this creative lady teaches painting and in recent years has illustrated three books.

I recall a play in which a young man stands before the portrait of his grandfather who had been President of the United States. The young man says to his sister, "I think I can fill his shoes." His sister thoughtfully replied, "It's the other end of grandfather which was most important." Indeed, it is what is in your mind and spirit that counts. There are people who would find life much more meaningful if they would say "yes" to life rather than "no" every time someone asks them to do something. The volunteers in small boats who were setting out to rescue the British soldiers from the beach at Dunkirk were told, "Now off you go and good luck — steer for the sound of the guns." This is the challenge of our times: steer for the sound of the guns and make your life count for something worthwhile. Unlock the inner doors of your life to some great living.

II. ONE WHO HAS A FAITH FOR LIVING

In his earlier days David had attended sheep and you can see him watching o'er the flock by night, warding off enemies that might attack them. Behind that dramatic moment with Goliath you can be sure there were many hours of practice with that sling shot. In the lesser encounters of life he had learned how to handle himself with faith. You see here a young man who had learned how to put faith ahead of fear.

This is not easy, for the Goliaths all about us are frightening. A little boy said, "I'm not afraid, but my stomach is." Someone asked me if I ever get "butterflies" inside before I start preaching. I said, "Yes, but I try to keep them flying in formation."

When I was majoring in philosophy at USC we centered in on the thought form and life outlook of the 6th Century BC philosopher, Pythagoras. He declared that the noblest task one

could undertake was to teach men how to live. This is what Jesus did so magnificently. The old philosopher taught a second thing: that man must seek the sources of normal life in contact with God. His disciples began the day with prayer and a solitary walk. The vital thing for Pythagoras was that a man find God's purpose for himself.

Dr. Paul Tournier has always been one of my favorite writers, for he was a deeply Christ-centered medical man, psychiatrist and theologian. He sees real living as made up of an alternation between meditation and action, and says that spiritual strength is the greatest strength in the world.

Out of his broad experience touching the complexities of human life and behavior, Dr. Tournier says that the problems of men are always, in the last analysis, religious. The key to facing the Goliaths of your days is that of finding a spiritual outlook upon life, and Dr. Tournier goes a step further and says, "The only true source of discipline in this world is fellowship with Christ. The moment Christ really comes into a person's life he becomes changed."

The great German surgeon Sauerbruch put it this way, "The world needs a directing idea," and he saw that as God. Do you have that directing power in your life? Do you feel that in life's ongoing moments you do not stand alone? If there is one thing, among many, the Gospel affirms it is this: that there are decisive moments in a person's life, when under the guidance of the Holy Spirit there takes place a radical change in a person's basic attitude. You see it in Paul on the Damascus road, and in a great host of dedicated lives since — men and women who met Christ along the way and were changed. This is to have new life.

So often Jesus said, "O ye of little faith." I don't know what your hangups are, or what frightens you, or what Goliaths gnaw at your insides, but why not let go of them? For here stands the

Christ of the ages to say, "I have come that ye might have life and have it to the full."

David was among those who put on his real self. He chucked the armour that weighed him down. He certainly had a faith for living. His life was marked by ups and downs, by sorrow and joy, by victory and defeat — but looking back across from the perspective of a wise old man, he captured the story of his life in words that are immortal:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me. . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen.

"Give me a man that we might fight together," cried Goliath. Well, he sure got one. Pray God this may be said of you and me.

HOW THE MEEK INHERIT THE EARTH

When I visited Nazareth several years ago, I had not realized it was located in the hill country about 30 miles from Tiberius. The high point of the visit, of course, was to see where Jesus spent his boyhood and observe the location of Joseph's carpenter shop, according to tradition. It was said that the family lived upstairs over the shop.

As you read the Gospels you become aware that Jesus not only lived upstairs physically, but mentally and spiritually as well. There is always something appealing about the heights. I remember my first ride in a barnstorming plane when I was a youngster. The pilot nose dived from 10,000 feet to give me a thrill. He almost gave me a stroke! I felt like the pilot who radioed his passengers, "We're lost but we're making good time." But, I was amazed at how many of Minnesota's 10,000 lakes one could see from 10,000 feet. I yelled some comment about it, and the pilot exclaimed, "That's the way it is, the higher you go the more you see." Of course. It is true of the physical universe and equally true of the spiritual life.

Each year near Memorial Day I thumb through my record book and recall the friends and relatives who have moved out into that world not made with human hands but eternal in the heavens. I came across the name of Sewell Johnson. Whenever you asked him how he felt he would always reply, "Class A." with the result he became known as Class A Johnson to his friends. Even his laundry was affectionately marked Class A. It is a great thing to meet a person who is Class A in all areas of his life, especially in a day when so many people

are Class B, C, D, E, and F. I want to suggest two areas where we need to live Class A, where we need to exist in the highlands of the mind.

I. IN OUR HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

A man visiting a telescope factory stood watching a workman polish a lens with the palm of his hand. "Why is it necessary to use the hand?" he asked. Replied the workman, "There comes a time in the making of a fine lens when nothing can be substituted for the human touch." In a hospital emergency room one night a woman was brought in with a badly lacerated arm. While the doctor did the stitching I said, "You hold on to my hand real tight." She did and afterwards said, "Thank you for that personal touch." It was a simple thing but important. For the simple things so often make or break life. As a poet expressed it, "Think naught of a trifle, though it appears small; small sands make the mountains, moments make a year, and trifles life."

Sherlock Holmes founded his detection upon his carefulness in taking notice of little things, the trifles. This was a part of the genius of Jesus. He was always so kind, and people were healed just by touching His garment. It brings us back to a word I have lifted up many times — that our religion, our faith must make a difference in our attitudes and actions at the point where we make our day to day decisions.

Oliver Wendell Holmes on his goth birthday defined life this way, "Life is action and passion. A man must share in the action and passion of his day or stand in peril of being judged not to have lived." I would add one additional word — compassion. It was said of Jesus that He had "compassion" upon the multitudes. My, how we need a rebirth of that in our American life today. We need it in our day to day relationships, especially when there is so much violence and ill-temper around us. We get torn up on the inside by such little things.

I well remember a woman who bumped my car from behind at a traffic signal. She was furious and yelled, "I can't understand what's the matter with you drivers today. You're the third one I've hit." I listened to two motorists going at it because one had nicked the other fellow's fender. Then I noted a bumper sticker on the car of the fellow who was doing the most blustering: it read, "Jesus is the Way."

What is so unique about Jesus is that He hated sin, but He never hated persons. My, if we could get hold of that distinction it would change the world of our human relationships. How would you rate yourself today? Are you marked by compassion or prejudice? Do you make mountains out of molehills? Do you pay attention to the little courtesies, the human touch that can make such a difference in our relationships with people? There is a verse in Proverbs which says, "The law of kindness is in her tongue." I wonder if it is in ours. The Christian principle to "grow in grace" means to grow in graciousness.

Dr. Frank Court tells of the time his father visited Mahatma Ghandi and asked if Ghandi would give him a message to take back to his congregation. Ghandi flared and curtly said, "You Americans always want a special word." The couple left and soon Ghandi's secretary rushed out and invited them back. He said, "Mr. Ghandi is sorry. He does not believe in anger." They went back and Ghandi apologized. He said, "I do have a message for you: my life is a message."

Here we are — self-proclaimed Christians. We say we are followers of Christ. Would you say today that your life is your message? Would other people know you are Christian without your saying a word — simply because of what you are?

II. IN OUR MEEKNESS

A second area where we need to live Class A, in the highlands of the mind, is related to an old and often misunderstood, beatitude. Jesus had a life-lifting word for persons in every situation.

When strength was needed He said, "My peace I give unto you — let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." In a moment of loneliness you can turn to His word, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." But this simple beatitude has puzzled many people, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." In our experience we would say the meek person winds up with a scab on his nose, as the little boy with a black eye explained, "I got hit with a guided muscle." Our problem is we always equate weakness with meekness.

What Jesus is actually saying is this, "Happy is the man with self-control restraint." Restraint is a virtue to achieve and it is intimately related to what I have been talking about in relation to graciousness and compassion, and living a life that is a message to the world.

Meekness also means something else. The Greek word for meekness is *praos* which means the taming of wild animals. That is to say that the meek are God-tamed. As wild horses are caught, bridled and tamed, so are the passions of man tamed by God. Saul of Tarsus is exhibit A. He pranced about wildly in an effort to stamp out the Christian movement, and then came that moment on the Damascus road when the good Lord took this ranting, snorting, egotistical mind and tamed it. There came out of Saul a Paul, the Christian leader. This man who breathed fire could describe himself as "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." He had been God-tamed.

What does this kind of meekness do for one in a world of violence? It makes him really free. Let me draw an analogy:

The dog stems from a branch of the wolf family. Through training and love the dog has become domesticated and enjoys the companionship of people. The dog achieves far greater freedom moving around with its master than does the fear-driven wolf. Being tamed by man the dog achieves a higher standard of life than the wolf ever knows. So instead of being

weakened by his allegiance to a master, the dog is really strengthened by it.

This is what is meant by commitment to one greater than yourself. Look at the human wolves who carouse around our streets and live on lust and greed. These pathetic persons do not achieve a fraction of the joy, courage and satisfaction and quality of life that comes to the individual who has deep loyalties and disciplines within his or her life. This is to be really free.

When your life is God-tamed you are free from pettiness, a vicious temper, foul language, from the raging forces of evil that continually pound against your life. This is what it is to live above yourself, to be Class A. How does your life fit into this picture? Do you see yourself as God-tamed? Someone says that what we need in our days is God and gumption. I'm not sure what gumption means, but perhaps you could say it is spiritual perception.

There is that dramatic scene drawn by Ivan Karamazov in his poem "The Grand Inquisitor." The scene is set in Seville the day after the burning of hundreds of heretics in one of those bloody carnivals which made the 16th Century a horror.

Christ had come to visit the people and the tortured flocked to Him. As a little 7-year-old girl was borne in her white coffin down the steps of the cathedral, Jesus softly whispered, "Talitha Cumi," and the youngster arose and looked wonderingly about.

The Grand Inquisitor stood watching, clad in gorgeous robes and without humility. Suddenly he points to Jesus and cries, "Arrest that man!" Hours later he stole into the dungeon with his lantern to bitterly upbraid the prisoner for coming to earth again and upsetting what little human authority the church had been able to patch together against the freedom felt by the Christians. His eyes burned with fanatic fire and the threat of death hung there.

Christ never spoke a word. Quietly in the silence that fell

Jesus drew near to the old man and kissed him. That was His answer: compassion in the midst of rage. The Inquisitor's lips trembled and his eyes burned blindly. He stumbled toward the door, threw it open and screamed, "Go and come no more. . . never, never again come back." And Jesus went out into the dark streets to come no more to that town.

In a world that has never learned the power and strength of meekness, of living upstairs in the world of the spirit, are we ready to cry with the Grand Inquisitor, "Go and come no more?" Or are we God-tamed? Can each of us really say, "My life is my message."

DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT

You may recall the story of the two men riding along in a carriage. One looked out on the beautiful countryside and said, "God is great in His infinite wisdom." Said the other, "I'm not so sure. Look at the green of the hills and trees and then our beards. Why did not God make our beards to blend with the fields? And this horse's head. It is too far removed from the carriage." Commented the first traveler, "Were our beards to blend with the green of the grass, and were the horse's head nearer to us, the horse would eat our beards. God is great in His infinite wisdom."

I suspect every person at some time wonders about the wisdom of God. Victor Hugo said once, "My, if I had God's power I sure would change a lot of things." Then he added, "But if I had God's wisdom along with His power I'd probably leave things as they are."

Cecil B. DeMille spoke for a California Law Enforcement group at one time and commented, "Man has made 32,600,000 laws, but he hasn't succeeded in improving upon the Ten Commandments." Little wonder Jesus said to the rich young ruler, "Keep the Commandments."

These are the basic laws of our civilization and are recorded in three places in the Old Testament, the oldest version being in the 20th Chapter of Exodus, as well as the 34th Chapter. They reveal the Divine Laws that must guide our lives, just as natural laws reveal how the universe operates. Here are the spiritual laws that are so vital to man's inner life, as in the law of gravitation to the outer world. The Ten Commandments

are the foundation for effective living. They became the cornerstone of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

Here I want to turn to the Ninth Commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." If ever there was a generation that needs to dust this one off and take a good hard look at it, this is the one.

I. WHAT IS A LIE?

If we can answer this question it will help us more clearly understand what we mean by truth. Bacon, in his essay of truth, refers to the incident when Pilate looked at Jesus and asked, "What is truth?" Bacon says, "Jesting, Pilate stayed not for an answer." This could be said of many people today. We live in a time that is so accustomed to lies we do not make too much effort to pursue the truth. Someone says the "purpose of the truth is to stretch it," and we sure know how to do that. But what is a lie?

There is an interesting scene in Henry Van Dyke's "The Story of the Other Wise Man." Artaban comes to Bethlehem, enters a little cottage and finds a woman singing softly to her baby. Artaban, a Parthian Noble, had come in search of the Christ child. In the midst of the tender scene the soldiers of Herod come marching down the street and a cry of terror echoes everywhere, "They're killing our children." Artaban quickly moves to the doorway, while the captain moves forward to thrust him aside. Artaban says, "I'm all alone in this place, and I am waiting to give this jewel to the prudent captain who will leave me in peace." The captain grabs the luminous jewel and cries, "March on, there is no child here. . ."

Then a strange thing happens. Artaban, conscience stricken, prays, "God of truth forgive my sin. I have said the thing that is not to save the life of a child. . ." At the same moment, the mother is weeping for joy and says, "Because thou hast saved

the life of my little one, may the Lord bless thee and keep thee. . . and give thee peace." The question, "Did Artaban tell a lie?"

If you define a lie as a verbal misstatement, then the answer must be yes. But, if you see it as being related to atmosphere, attitude and intent, then the reply must be Artaban did not deceive the captain, for giving him the jewel spoke more than words. Neither did he derive any personal benefit from his action. Should I say I jumped off a five story building an hour ago and walked away unhurt, that would be a lie. It would be a silly statement, for it would not deceive you.

Bearing false witness is not new. Among the six things the Lord hates, as told in Proverbs, is a "lying tongue." An injunction against lying appears in the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi and the 12 tables of the Roman Law. The Hebrews enforced their laws against false witnesses by having them participate in the execution of the accused. If the testimony was found to be false the witness himself was executed. This could change the complexion of many modern court trials.

II. HOW ARE WE FALSE?

Let me come closer to home and point out several ways in which we bear false witness, without always being sensitive to the fact we are doing it. We condemn and judge people in what we say, the way we say it and often in what we do not say. We can be like the character witness who was asked by the judge if he thought the defendant had stolen some chickens. He replied, "I wouldn't want to go that far, but if I was a chicken and he was around, I sure would want to roost high."

A. Saying nothing can be a terrible tyranny in many life situations. I recall a young man several years ago who was mistakenly arrested and falsely accused. He was wrongly identified as the driver who had left the scene of an accident. He had a bad time until finally several days later the guilty person came forward and confessed. This fellow said, "My friends were

strangely silent. Only one person came forward and said he believed me. But after it was over all my buddies crowded around and assured me they had been pulling with me all the time." We need more silence, but it can be a tyranny at times. The most common excuse heard today is, "I don't want to be involved."

B. Self-deception takes a great toll in our society. A vicious way to lie is to withhold part of the truth. Peter Howard tells of a man whose conscience troubled him, so he confessed to his former farmer-employer he had stolen a rope. The farmer forgave him. This was fine except the fellow failed to mention that when he took the rope a cow was on the end of it.

William James said once that "the mind has an amazing power to deceive itself." My, the people who go through life lying and fooling themselves into believing what they are doing is right because "everybody is doing it." I never cease to be amazed at the number of people who undertake to chisel the churches with their lies and trumped up stories of need. In 40 years of helping people all have promised to return what money I gave them when they got their first pay check, or arrived at their destination, but only two ever did. One of these particularly surprised me.

It was during World War II and a woman came in and wanted to borrow \$5. She was heading for Denver. She said she had been working as a maid in a home in the beach area, and had become convinced it was a center of spy activity. Some of the things she said had my hair standing on end, which is why I have so much less of it today! I really didn't believe the story but gave her \$5 for originality. She said she had her plane ticket but needed the money for incidentals. Within a week the lady had returned the money, and several weeks later the occupants of the house she talked about were arrested.

Never be so deceived as to try to convince yourself something

is right when it is wrong. A French soldier was for years honored as a hero and finally confessed that under fire he had deserted. He said, "I got tired of living with a lie." More people need to get that tired. If someone is living with deception, or trying to get by with a double life, or is a chronic liar and distorter of truth, hear again these words, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Mr. Hitler missed an ancient German legend and it is too bad, for the course of history might have been quite different. It is this: lies have short legs. There is something in the universe that is against them, and ultimately truth comes out. It is truth that sets us free on the inside.

C. Then there is gossip and this catches all of us. You would think Jesus had said, "Go ye into the world and spread gossip." When gossip is clothed in Christian virtue, it can become devastating to the Kingdom of God. When someone tells you something that reflects against another person's character don't you believe it until you have the facts and be sure you have all the facts. I would say it is in the area of unfounded gossip that there is more pettiness in the church than at any other point. The omission of a single fact can sometimes completely change the picture.

Some years ago a number of men met at a prearranged place, checked their weapons carefully and went out into the night one at a time. They hid themselves near an entertainment spot and when a man came out they shot him down in cold blood. This sounds pretty vicious, except I left out two important facts: The men were FBI agents and the man they shot down was John Dillinger, America's number one criminal at that time.

Only the good Lord knows how many characters have been ruined, how many lives wrecked, and how many good people besmirched because of rumors circulated about them — rumors that no person took the trouble to check.

Pierre Van Paasen's "Days of Our Lives" is the story of a hunchback and his beautiful sister who ultimately committed suicide because of the lack of consideration on the part of her friends. There were unfounded slurs against her character and suspicions talked about.

The Sunday after her death the parish priest looked searchingly at the congregation and said, "Christians, (the word stung) when the Lord of life and death shall ask me on the day of judgement, "Where are thy sheep?" I shall not answer Him. Nor shall I respond when He asks a second time. But the third time I will hang my head in shame and say, "They were not sheep, Lord, they were a pack of wolves!"

So, when you hear rumors, juicy secrets, gossip, be Christ-like not to believe it until you really know whether it is true or not, and then be kind enough not to pass it on.

Walter Lippman said we must recover a "public philosophy" of truth and fair play if we are to save our way of life for our nation was founded upon the search for truth. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." God knows we need such freedom, the freedom born of truth not falsehood.

CHAPTER VI



Suffering and Healing

WHY DO GOOD FOLKS SUFFER?

It was early in 1942 when the first American troops marched into London during World War II. The populace thrilled to their spirit, and the friendly invasion exhilarated the soldiers themselves. Joyously they sang, "Deep in the Heart of Texas" and other "foreign" songs. Suddenly the troops turned into a main street and a strange hush fell over the scene. The gay songs died on their lips. They were looking for the first time upon an area that had been blown to bits, and they saw the great wounds in the skyline. The Americans realized that the city and its people had suffered terribly.

I think of a brilliant 51-year-old electronics engineer who, at the prime of his life and career, was stricken with a severe heart attack, and it is expected that he will never work again.

A young couple with whom I enjoyed a close friendship anticipated with great joy the coming of their first baby. It was born with tragically deformed lungs. After two agonizing years of trying to keep the little one alive, it died. The stricken mother said, "We didn't expect life to do this to us."

I am not undertaking to be melodramatic. These are hard, realistic experiences that happen everyday to people. In the flash of a second, life can change from triumph to tragedy and we ask, "Why do good folk suffer?"

We have a similar reaction to Palm Sunday. The triumphant crowd entered the city. The shouts of Hosannahs rang in their ears. It was a friendly invasion and the people were ready to crown Christ King. But, if we are honest we must say that this triumphal entry into Jerusalem fizzled. It was a prelude to

tragedy. Today the gate through which Jesus made this entry into the city is sealed shut, and tradition says it will not be reopened until His triumphal coming again. But, Palm Sunday was a gateway to the cross. The whole history of man as portrayed in the Bible seems to reflect this.

There is never any question that God is in charge. The final goal of God's rule of righteousness and the reign of love is never sold short, but from the beginning way back to Adam the play doesn't go well. The evil within man seemingly leaves God having continually to improvise in response to some new human waywardness. So The Messiah comes and He is acclaimed as a savior. A few loyal followers are impressed, the multitudes are indifferent and the power structure of the government hostile. So even the triumphal entry doesn't turn out right. A cross protrudes from the palm branches and we ask, "Why must a good man suffer so?" If God is good how can such things happen to human beings, let alone One who was proclaimed to be the Son of God in person?

It isn't easy to grasp what it means. Still, men of insight have always seen the strange fact that progress in this world is always associated with a cross. The full dimension of the Christian way did not dawn in man's mind until after the crucifixion of Jesus. It settled the question for the disciples as to who was in charge of the universe. But, even so, the question haunts us, "Why must good folk suffer?" We cannot escape it.

A man had inscribed on his tombstone, "At last I rest in peace." His wife added, "Until we meet again." We have never known a world at peace, or an era without suffering.

I. SUFFERING IS PART OF LIFE

I read a statement somewhere that said, "Suffering is just a state of mind." I don't think anyone who has endured physical pain would agree. A doctor friend told me of a patient of his who had 65 percent of his body burned from the chest down

was saved by skin grafts. Said the doctor, "There is no pain more terrible than third degree burns over a large portion of the body." Suffering is real. If we could remake the world we would omit it. In the story of Christ we would jump from the birth at Bethlehem to Easter Sunday and omit Good Friday, but the cross sweeps away our superficiality and compels us to see that suffering and love are at the center of life.

The Bible itself does not gloss over it. In the Psalms the word appears more than 40 times. Job cried, "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." In Old Testament times it was believed earthquakes, storms and illness came from God. To believe anything less would be to lessen His power, thus the only explanation they could give was that suffering was God's punishment for sin. Jesus rejected this idea, and today we see that while all wickedness brings trouble, not all trouble is a punishment for wickedness.

Let's look at three types of suffering:

A. There is that which we bring on ourselves. A judge said to a prisoner, "You've been appearing in this court for 20 years." The fellow replied, "Can I help it if you don't get promoted?" Many people bring hard days upon themselves because of poor judgement. Dr. Walter Judd said, "There is an astronomical, chemical and physical order to the universe. Likewise, there is a moral order." When we break these laws they ultimately break us instead. Eat too many green apples and you get a stomach ache. We know today there is a correlation between smoking and cancer of the lungs, just as there is between drinking and cirrhosis of the liver. We may say, "won't count this time," but it is being counted nonetheless in the body tissues. So, we bring suffering on ourselves because of our own mischoices.

B. There is the suffering that grows out of our social relationships. This ranges from hard luck to tragedy. In Germany a crossing guard raised the signal arms when a train had passed.

He didn't see one coming in the other direction, and 30 children were killed. Not because it was the "will of God," but because of man's carelessness. Always we run the risk of being hurt, even killed by our fellow man. God has given us the privilege of exercising free will and making our own decisions. If this means we run the risk of being killed by a drunk driver abusing his free will, it likewise means we are helped by our fellow man. Most of us would say we are what we are because of our relationships with other persons. We are dependent upon one another for our well-being, our comforts and emergency help.

C. Sufferings that result from calamities of nature. Ordinarily we do not think of earthquakes, typhoons or tornadoes as evil until they invade human affair and cause hurt. There are earthquakes every day but unless someone is killed they don't trouble us. But many people conclude God is cruel and deliberately brings suffering upon man. Yet, this is not true for as James Sellers puts it, "To be good, creation does not have to be devoid of trials, tests and hardships."

If we did not live in a world that tests our mettle we would not grow strong of character. Nature is basically friendly and works for us, or we could not endure five minutes on this planet. The sun that can be a tyranny in the summer desert, is the same one that makes existence possible.

One fact is clear: the afflictions that come upon us keep alive the great wells of human sympathy and sensitize our spirits to respond to the needs of other persons. They cause us to grow in character and in soul, so there is purpose in life's cross experiences.

I am aware I have not covered the waterfront, for there is a type of suffering that appears to be meaningless, that destroys rather than makes for character. I speak of the suffering that is associated with long, lingering, degenerative illnesses. Some of this springs from the unnecessary prolongation of life

through our medical genius today. Other types of illnesses spur medical research and the day may not be too far away when cancer will be as rare as typhoid fever, when leukemia will be no more.

Dr. and Mrs. Henry P. Van Dusen, leaders in American theological life, swallowed overdoses of sleeping pills in their Princeton, New Jersey home in a mutual suicide pact. Dr. Van Dusen, former president of Union Theological Seminary, was an advocate of an individual's right to terminate his or her own life rather than face the prospect of debilitating old age. Mrs. Van Dusen was 80 and her husband 77. They were convinced their suicide carried no burden of sin, but rather the promise of after-life. This action, by two prominent Christians, will lead to much debate among theologians and others for years to come.

II. SUFFERING OPENS NEW GATEWAYS TO LIFE

Karl Jaspers, the German philosopher, spoke of what he called, "boundary situations of life." These are situations where you feel at the limit of your powers, your endurance. You feel like the diver, 250 feet down, who received a message: surface immediately, the ship is sinking! These boundary situations involve death, pain, guilt, conflict and suffering. The basic question is how will we face them? You can revert to self-pity or do as Jesus did.

His was not a life of comfort. When He was a baby, Herod wanted to kill Him. As a teenager He had to take over family responsibilities when His father died. The religious leaders hounded Him throughout His public ministry, and in the moment of triumphal entry a cross pokes its edge through the palm branches. But what happened to Jesus did not break Him. It made Him!

Suffering is always intensely personal and you experience it alone, whatever may be the sympathy and concern of others. What Shelley said of poets is true for others, "They learn in

suffering what they teach in song." What has been called "The moral grandeur of independent integrity" springs from hardship.

A young woodpecker, feeling exceedingly chipper, looked around and tackled an oak tree. At that moment a bolt of lightning split the tree from top to bottom. The bird looked at what was left of the mighty oak and said, "My goodness, I didn't know my own strength." Neither do we until lightning strikes and we are faced with hard days. How we respond makes the difference. Remember the Chinese legend that says, "The wise bamboo bends."

I often think of Alec Templeton who was born blind, but didn't know it until he was eight years old. One day someone said he was "blind as a bat." He asked his mother what it meant to be blind. Then he learned that other people had a sense of sight he didn't possess. He had been taught to listen to great music, beautiful recordings, and then through the genius of his ability, he could commit them to memory instantly and play them on the piano. So well integrated was Alec Templeton at eight years of age that he went on to become one of the finest pianists and popular artists of our time. It takes something deep inside a person to build a career out of blindness. But this is the glory of persons.

It is my observation that people who carry great loads and soul-searing responsibilities develop a maturity, a depth of understanding that others of us do not reach. You see this in Jesus.

He prayed in the garden, "Let this cup pass from me," but before dawn you hear these words, "Not my will but thine be done." No man can deny, however indifferent he may be, that the suffering and death of Christ upon the cross made an impact upon the minds and hearts of men from which they have never been able to escape. For we see here that love and suffering go hand in hand, that pain is no strange intruder from another

planet, but is a part of the process of living. I do not know all there is to know about the cross, but I do know this: that the Galilean took the evil and suffering imposed upon Him and propelled it into the avenue of divine usefulness. He did not let it defeat Him.

Perhaps there is purpose to suffering. Life is dangerous because God's goal for life is not comfort but growth. Suffering so often transforms life, strips away the sham, and gets our sights on what really matters: God, Christ, family and friends. When the chips are down, when life hangs in the balance all you can really think about is your relationships to God and family. Everything else is secondary. This is why good people suffer along with everyone else.

I remember an evening on the beach at a little Italian town on the Adriatic. A stiff wind was blowing and the great palms swayed back and forth. The tops practically touched the ground at times. I said to myself, "The trees bend but do not break — because their roots go deep." I pray God that this may be said of you and of me — that under the winds and pressures of life with its suffering we will never break, because, like the trees, our roots go deep — deep into the holding soil of God.

WHAT ABOUT MIRACLE CURES

I recall a Sunday when one of our custodians had left some tacks on the pulpit, and I asked, "What if during the sermon I had brought my hand down on one of those tacks?" He replied, "That's one point on which you wouldn't linger!" There are some points on which a preacher may linger too long, and some themes get overworked, but there is one that always stirs the listening ear: healing. If there is one single word that makes your life and mine it is certainly this one: healing. For, whatever else we want to be, at the top of the list is *well persons*. America's number one problem is still its citizens' health.

It is said that over half the population needs the services of a psychiatrist, a fact which emerges from a study of industrial records. This sounds exaggerated, but if you reduce it to 25 percent or 30 percent the figure is still astounding.

Of course, there are various levels of illness, as the Menninger Clinic has determined. There they speak of "Five Orders of Dyscontrol," and they seek to discover the extent to which an illness infringes upon the total organism or its parts. The first level of dyscontrol represents a relatively minor mental distress, but when you get to the fifth level the individual is incapacitated and may require hospitalization.

So what is illness? It is imbalance, a lower level of effectiveness. When one feels that he is "falling apart," "getting upset," or "flying to pieces," he is describing a threatened state of imbalance. So the ancient Cassius was right in saying, "It is not in our stars but in ourselves that we are underlings."

If illness is imbalance and lower level effectiveness, then

health is the opposite: it is balance, the ability to “do your thing,” to manage yourself affectively. It is a sense of physical and mental well being and being able to meet your responsibilities head on.

In Old Testament days it was believed sickness was Divine punishment for sin, and the cure of disease was the sign of God’s forgiveness. It was believed illness was the result of demon possession of the mind or body, and motion pictures like *The Exorcist* have played on this fear as it exists even today. Through the years many people have been put to death because it was believed they were “possessed of the devil.” Jesus certainly rejected the idea that illness was God’s punishment for wrongdoing. He was Himself a healer and saw that the mind can make the body ill and the body can infect the mind.

Today this is known as psychosomatic medicine — for the psyche is recognized, not only as a factor in functional disease, but as an actual cause of the pathological processes leading to disease. We know now the powerful effect emotions have on health. At the Mayo Clinic they can treat 25 percent of their patients with scientific instruments. The other 75 percent are sending the sickness of their minds into their bodies.

They tell of a woman who paid 602 visits to 22 physicians, was hospitalized five times, received 33 different medications, 600 allergy tests, 1500 injections — then a physician brought in a psychiatrist and it was discovered she had a deep sense of guilt over a family situation. Her emotions made her physically ill.

While going east by train on one occasion I chatted with a rather remarkable woman from Wyoming. She is a cook on a cattle ranch. Her nearest neighbor is 35 miles away, and the closest town 75 miles. She cooks for 18 to 25 men everyday. She told of being snowed in for weeks at a time, and said, “It is no place to be if you can’t stand yourself, but fortunately I like

myself." It was an attitude that made for health and she looked it. Spiritual attitudes and beliefs have a profound effect upon physical well-being.

I. WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT HEALING

Christianity has always said man is more than a body. We are concerned about healthy-minded persons. Our attitudes have a vital relationship to physical and mental well-being. The gloomy personality jeopardizes his physical self. There are people like the chap who had a physical checkover and was told to take a rest. He did and returned looking wonderful. When the doctor complimented him on his suntan he replied, "Yes, I may look fine on the outside, but I am pale underneath."

Christianity is a healing faith because Jesus was a healer. Many things He did are called miracles. It is strange that a generation that has witnessed one miracle after another — radio, television, the miracles of medicine and of space exploration — is skeptical about the miracles of Jesus. Twenty-five of Jesus' recorded miracles are related to healing. Some people claim them to be legendary. Others see them as parables.

The question revolves around what we believe about Jesus. Was He simply a human genius, a psychotherapist born before His time? Or was He a supernatural person revealing healing power, forces and energies belonging to a plane of activity beyond our normal grasp? Or was He a combination of both? Perhaps the latter comes closer to the truth. I believe in the Divinity of Jesus and by this I mean the more than human element that is evident within Him. His unique relationship to God made Him at home in the spiritual world, and He lived on a level of insight and spiritual knowledge that we are just now beginning to understand. We call what Jesus did miracles because they break through the present level of human operation, and we see evidence of spiritual energies of which we know little.

Now, it needs to be clear that healing comes in many ways — through hypnotism, mesmerism, Indian medicine men and faith healers. During a community x-ray survey in Los Angeles a woman came a second time. She said she had been helped so much by the “former treatment” that she wanted another. She had only had a chest x-ray.

There are always three elements present in healing: suggestion, faith, the expectation of being healed. There are multitudes of healing movements — ranging from Christian Science, to Unity, to Kathryn Kuhlman or Oral Roberts. These three elements they hold in common — suggestion, faith, and the expectancy of being healed. Some like Miss Kuhlman and Roberts rely on faith in God, others on psychic energy. Dr. Charles Wahl, Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA School of Medicine, says, “The power of belief can change body processes in a whole series of ways.”

Inner determination is a factor in healing, the power that refuses to surrender to illness. This keeps many people alive much longer than they would have lived without it. Dr. Viktor Frankel told of individuals in the Nazi concentration camps who died, often within 24 hours, when they lost their will to live.

There are indeed miracles of healing. Spiritual healings take place that cannot be explained through medical science. Dr. Alexis Carrell sees prayer as the key and calls it “a mystical absorption of consciousness, a principle permeating and transcending our world.”

Now having said this it needs to be noted that extensive studies have been made of the extravagant claims of faith healers. Dr. Wade Boggs, Jr., who has researched the subject exhaustively, says there is often reason to suspect fraud in connection with some practices. He states that all faith healers have a high percentage of failures, but no public testimony is ever held to hear

the stories of people who tried to be cured by faith but failed. Of the millions of people who have visited the great Catholic Shrine at Lourdes in France only 49 healings have been declared miracles — but the fact that the French Bureau of Medicine recognizes 49 miracles to have taken place is significant.

Some years ago a faith healer's work in Vancouver was studied by a committee of 11 ministers, eight Christian physicians, three university professors and a lawyer. Three hundred fifty persons who professed to be healed were investigated. Of these, there was no change in 301 cases. Thirty-nine died within six months following the campaign, five became insane, and five others suffered from nervous diseases from which they supposedly had been cured.

Dr. Charles Brown tells of an investigation of 100 cases where it was claimed that serious maladies had been faith cured. It was discovered that over two thirds of these same patients died in less than two years from the very diseases from which they had been healed.

II. WHAT ABOUT DOCTORS AND HEALING?

A.B. Simpson, a faith healer of 30 years ago, said, "If you can't trust the Lord, then call a doctor." John Dowie placed doctors, drugs and devils in the same category. Christian Science holds that all disease is due to "errors of the mortal mind." Fanatical warfare against the medical profession has pretty well diminished, though many people still have difficulty distinguishing between quackery and legitimate medical resources and help.

No physician ever claims to heal. Whether healing is instantaneous or gradual, whether it comes through a faith healer, a worship service, the knife of a surgeon, or the natural course of human events — however healing comes, it is always *divine healing*. Whether it is a simple cut on the finger or tubercu-

losis, it is not man that does the healing. The physician, minister, healer or psychiatrist may set the conditions whereby physical and mental healing takes place — they clean out the infection, the diseased elements — but always it is God who heals. Dr. Maxwell Maltz sees a strong psychic element present in healing and has seen remarkable changes take place when attitudes are changed, and a man or woman takes hold of faith.

III. A PLACE FOR SUFFERING

Often we are left with the searching question — what about those devout, equally dedicated people who pray just as sincerely as anyone else but die? We need to see that there is a place for suffering and hardship. Jesus went to a cross and Paul carried his “thorn in the flesh” to the end. Love and suffering are at the heart of the universe.

I think Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick put his finger on it when he told of walking through an apple orchard in Maine, and he was shocked to see a man slashing viciously at certain of the trees with a big knife. Asked why he was doing this, the fellow replied, “Some of our trees don’t begin to produce until they are hurt.” Many lives are like that. You can point to great lives that have been lived through the centuries and the greatness grew out of suffering, or a handicap or a limitation. Out of dark days multitudes of people have developed a quality of life and appreciation they would never have known otherwise.

So, if you have not experienced a miraculous healing it is not because God has something against you or a loved one, or that you are not as good as someone else. You do not need to cry out, “Why did God do this to me?” but rather ask, “What does God expect me to get from this experience?” Let your obstacle be a spur to deepening your faith.

This does not mean one ought not to keep searching for healing, but recognize it may come through many different chan-

nels. We should keep our spirits open so God can get at our minds and bodies. There are certain basic steps essential to the healing process.

1. Recognize there is a power outside of yourself. Faith was the key to Jesus' healing, a faith born of an expectant trust that God would heal through Him.

2. Turn on the power. Let it flow through you through prayer, believing God touches persons.

3. Be sure your relationship with yourself and others is right. Something in the universe is hostile to evil. When we consciously do wrong we are part of a universal experience psychologically. John Wesley put it this way, "Put out the fire in your bosom."

4. Determine what it is you want healed and center your attention on that.

5. Trust and cooperate with your physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, or minister. Let us readily see that all healing is Divine whatever the source.

Then remember that if the circumstances of your life do not change, you can. Paul, with his "thorn in the flesh" could still say, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

A favorite story of mine is of a little boy with a crippled leg. His father told him that one day they would go to the great cathedral and pray to God to heal the leg. The day came on his 12th birthday. The youngster was overwhelmed by the beauty of the sanctuary as he thumped down the long aisle to kneel at the altar with his father. Said the parent, "Now, son, pray that the Lord will heal you." And, after a few moments of silence the father added, "Son, now thank God for healing you."

The boy jumped to his feet with great anticipation, but a mark of disillusionment spread across his countenance, as the crippled leg still thumped down the cathedral aisle. As they neared the exit the lad suddenly stopped, a glow spread across

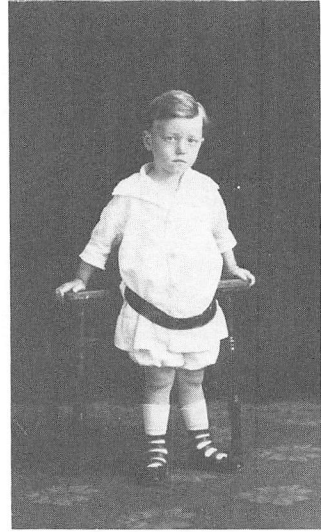
his face and he exclaimed, "Dad, you're right! I've been healed."

Young as he was, the youth was wise enough to know that if God had not taken the brace from his leg, he had taken it from his mind. Possibly it is more wonderful sometimes to have a brace removed from the mind than from a leg, for God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

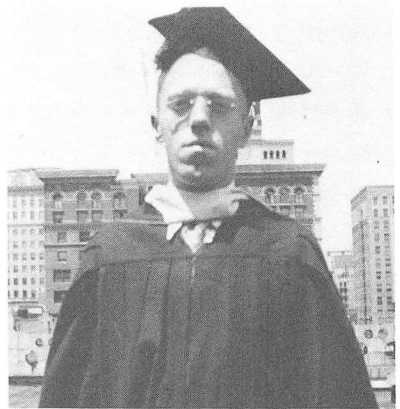
The power of Christ is in the world to help each of us overcome our limitations and live on top of them. Ours is a faith that heals, and if it does not always lead to physical healing, it mends the mind that we may endure.



Kenny, the twin on the left, with his father and mother, Arthur and Marie Carlson. His twin brother, Wesley, died in infancy.

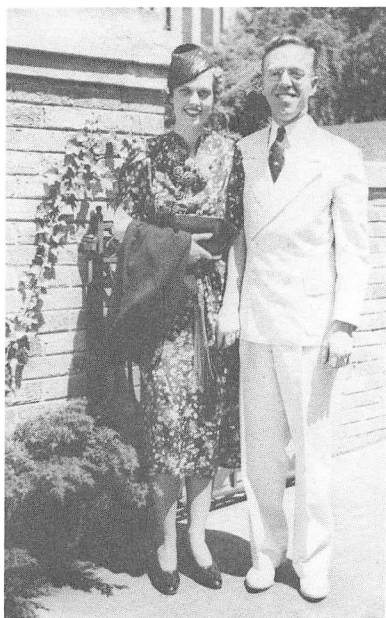


Kenny at three-and-one-half years.

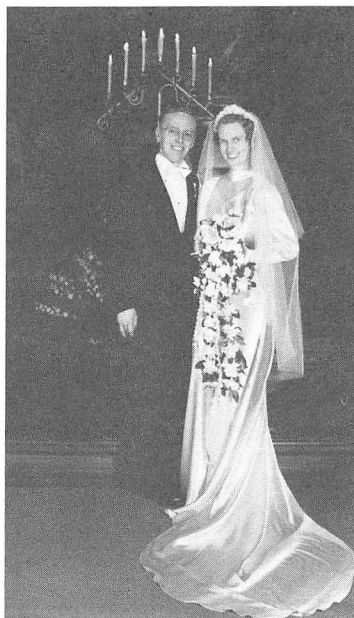


Happy graduation day! Kenny majored in philosophy and earned his degree from the University of Southern California. He completed his seminary work at Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill.

The young "virtuoso" with his dad. His dream was to become a concert pianist, but an auto accident injured his hand and thus altered his career.



Kenny courts lovely Rose Shannon.

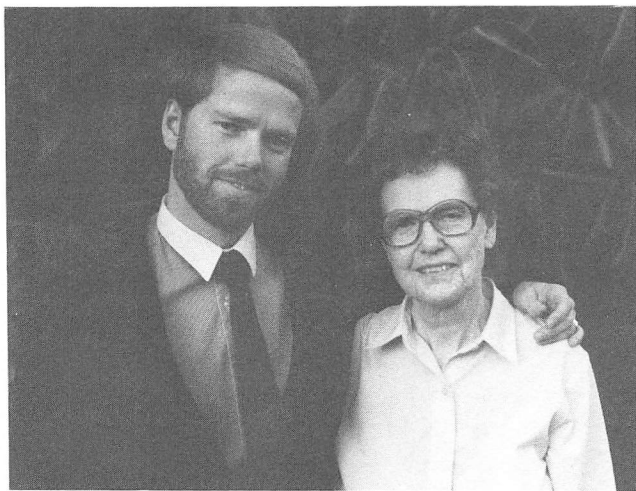


They were married September 5, 1937, at First Methodist Church in Los Angeles by Dr. Roy L. Smith.

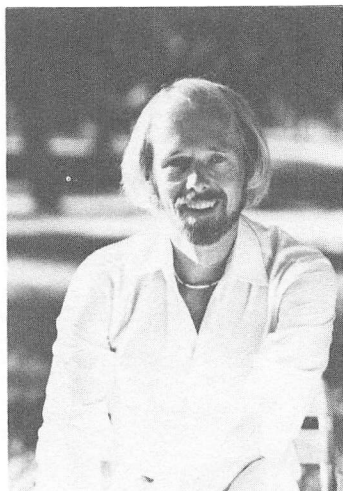


The Carlson family in 1958, during Kenny's twelve year ministry at First Methodist Church in Santa Monica.

Left to right: Kenny, Rose, Rick, Marsha, and Wes.



Rick and Rose Carlson, 1983.



Wes Carlson, 1983.



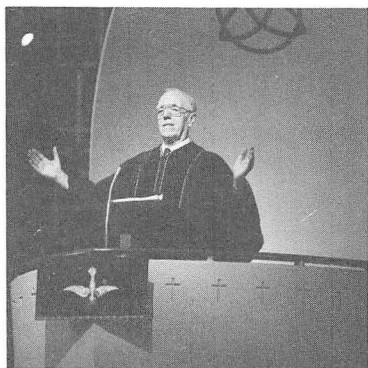
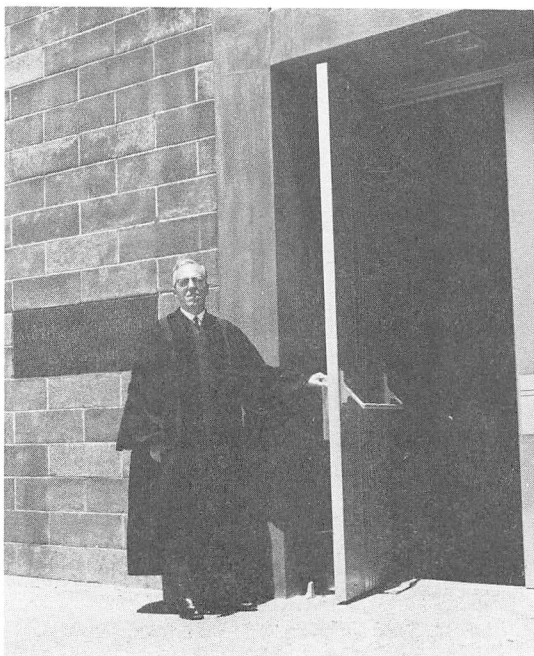
Grandma Rose and "Papa" with daughter Marsha and husband, David, and grandchildren Scott Donald and Sarah Marie, in whom Kenny delighted.



Overlooking the Sea of Galilee while touring Israel with sons Rick and Wes.



At the mouth of the River Jordan. The boat and fishing nets would make it appear that time has literally stood still since Biblical times.



(Above) From his pulpit shaped like a ship's prow, he gave his congregation inspiration, hope and encouragement to live life to the fullest. Kenny cared how others felt and felt how others cared.

(Left) At the entrance to the Methodist Cathedral of the West in Glendale, where he served for 17 years.



Kenny with Juanita Manning, his assistant for seventeen years.

(Right) Kenny's work as a Police Chaplain with the Glendale Police was an extension of his ministry. He is being interviewed by Clete Roberts.



(Below) Kenny and Rose after forty-four years of marriage. This was one of the last pictures taken of Kenny.



THE MIRACLE OF BEING YOU

This sermon was given by Dr. Carlson upon his return to the pulpit after being stricken by his sixth heart attack. He underwent triple bypass surgery and was away from the pulpit for seven months.

I never cease to be amazed at how quickly life can change, and you are well aware of this too. I remember clearly that last Sunday of September, 1976, and the glory of the morning worship services. A delightful fellowship luncheon was followed by an oxygen mask and a fast trip to the hospital. In the flash of a moment everything relating to my life became different, for heart attacks strike quickly. It is always a shock of the first magnitude to be projected from a person who cares for others to a cared for person. It is tough to lose control of your life.

Fortunately, I have a mental blackout of some of the things that happened to me during my three-month hospitalization. I have no recollection of the complications following my heart bypass surgery that necessitated my being on a respirator and hooked up to a dialysis machine. Nor do I recall the collection of tubes and gadgets connecting me to life sustaining equipment. For this I am grateful. It was about the end of October when my power of recall returned.

I think what jarred it back was the bill we received from the hospital which charged me \$26.70 for a pregnancy test, the results of which I never received. However, I received some interesting mail, including a baby in a cradle and a stork. A card read, "Congratulations. The test was positive. The nausea you had was not caused by medicine." A local reporter wrote that no doubt

I would preach my greatest sermon on the subject of "Expectations."

When you read through the pages of the Bible one thing becomes clear, among many: there is a distinct relationship between religion and health. Turn to the 103rd Psalm and you are caught by these words, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not His benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals your diseases." He can snatch sick people from the jaws of death, and we can think of many instances where this has happened and many where it has not. Obviously, we do not heal ourselves. All healing is divine healing for there is a power, an energy in the universe that makes this possible.

A sign in the Tokyo airport reads, "Baggage sent in all directions." Life does that to us. It can hurl us in unexpected directions very suddenly, but the wonderful thing is that we have within us the God-given strength to come back and go on living. For each of us is a miracle.

I. WE ARE REMARKABLY PUT TOGETHER

The Psalmist sensed this when he exclaimed, "For I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works." There is a persistence of life that is reflected in the capacity of the mind and body to "take it." Everything in us struggles to live.

I was reading recently that a plane has built into it an enormous margin of safety, that on the average flight it uses only 55 percent of its power. It has built in reserve power for emergencies. So it is true with us.

The ability of living things to maintain their constancy is called homeostasis. It amazes medical science just as it did great physicians of yesterday, including Hippocrates in the 5th Century B.C. Says Dr. James Knight, "The powers of healing and

the margin of safety of human physiology are so great that they stagger the imagination." As you know, you can live with one kidney or lung. Three fourths of the liver, the hub organ of the body, can go without impairing a single function.

The heart defies description. It is divided into four chambers and enclosed in a sac called the pericardium. In a year the heart pumps some 650,000 gallons of blood, or enough to fill more than 81 tank cars of 8,000 gallons each. It generates enough energy in 12 hours to lift a 65 ton tank car one foot off the ground. When you rest for one complete day you save the energy of 20,000 heart beats. This is why, when the heart is stricken, you have to live on a diet of rest, for the amazing thing is that the heart heals itself between beats. It has to heal while it works.

What is true of the body is equally true of the mind. It is as built in computer about the size of a walnut, so I understand. I had a professor once who would say to us, "If you get these three things in your head, you'll have them in a nutshell." Apparently he was right. If scientists were to produce or reproduce what the mind does it would cost at least a billion dollars and require a structure the size of the Empire State Building to contain it. It is almost unbelievable what the mind can absorb, the shocks it can withstand and still hold its balance. Yes, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

II. THE PITCH OF YOUR MIND CAN LEAD TO HEALTH OR ILLNESS

What a person thinks about, whatever it is that dominates the mind, bears a distinct relationship to emotional and physical well-being. This is why Dr. Karl Menninger said, "There is an upper level of the mind. Live in it." Thus it has become increasingly clear that the world of medicine cannot ignore religion, for it springs from the mind and shapes what we become.

Now, not all religion makes for healthy mindedness. I have often met individuals who believed their illness was divine

punishment for something they had done. A woman afflicted for some months said, "I guess God has something against me." Such an attitude and belief aggravates an illness. Jesus made clear that illness is not punishment. Each individual bears a unique relationship to his own illness, and the quality of his life is a factor in whether he lives or dies. If one's life has a spiritual dimension and he faces surgery with hope and trust in God to see him through, he has a stronger chance for survival than if the operation is faced with an attitude of despair. I read this word somewhere, "If physical survival is possible be sure your mind permits you to do so."

Out of the mind is born the will to move with life. An elderly fellow was asked if he had seen many new things in his lifetime. He replied, "Yes, and I've been against every one of them." Life continually confronts us with new situations. For example, I find that the peripheral vision to my left eye has been affected. It may or may not return. If someone is standing to the left of me and reaches out to shake hands I do not immediately see the hand. I do not see it until it is within the spectrum of my vision. Still, I have 20-20 vision and can see clearly, except in that small area. One always has to accept the reality of where he is and do the best he can with what he has. Never let it be said of you, as was said of Howard Hughes, "He lost touch with life." A healthful attitude is one that moves with life and accepts the reality of new situations that impose themselves upon us.

III. WHAT YOU BELIEVE MAKES YOUR LIFE

I have been reading some ancient history, and both the Greeks and Romans undertook to build a society upon their gods, but they were not big enough. The gods of the Greek and Roman cultures were like men and women larger than life, but not basically different from humans. It has been found that a culture

or an individual with a weak base can stand only when the pressures are not too great.

I have stood, as many of you have, on some of the old Roman roads, such as the Appian Way. People and wagons went over these roads and the humpbacked bridges easily centuries ago, but they would crumble under the load of a modern truck. So it is with cultures and persons. If they have nothing stronger to build on than their own finiteness, they crumble when the load gets too heavy. Rome had no sufficient inward base and went down. The early Christians worshipped Jesus as God, and believed in an infinite, personal God and this faith enabled them to take the pressure. As the Gospel writer put it, "By what you endure you make your life." When you have such a faith it will not be said of you, as was said of Marcus Aurelius, "He did not believe enough to be great."

It was the depth of my faith, coupled with the great power of prayer, that held me together during the crisis days. I felt I had a firm grip on God. It has been a long, tough pull and I look upon my survival as a miracle. My doctors agree, for from a strictly medical perspective there is no reason for me to be alive. The explanation has to be found elsewhere, though the wonderful, dedicated medical ministry that I received sure helped pull me through. The Finns have a word that cannot be adequately translated into English. It is "Sisu" and means "the something more within, a superhuman nerve force that makes for endurance." That's an interesting way to put it, but to me it is not "nerve force" but Christ power. During many of those long nights in the hospital I can say to you that the good Lord became exceedingly personal, as close as breathing, as intimate as hands and feet. I am alive today because of the life and attitude transforming experience that comes through Christ our Lord.

Dean Hugh Tilroe, of Syracuse University, was a great person,

an able Dean and a man's man. He said this significant thing one time to a preacher, "Never make a speech that you don't tell people that they can have a great life." I think if I was to try to express in a simple word what I have tried to do across the years in my preaching this is it: to say every Sunday, in some way, that with Christ each of us can live a great life.

I was reading recently that marvelous story of Harold Russell. It was a shock for this paratrooper to awaken from a coma only to discover his hands were gone. Despair set in. The tragedy was the result of a training camp accident during World War II.

One day Charley McGonegal, who had lost his own hands in World War I, visited Russell in the hospital and made the injured paratrooper see that the first and greatest obstacle he had to overcome was himself. This is always true in any affliction, isn't it? Slowly he came to see he was not crippled, only handicapped, and what a difference that made.

Well, you remember the amazing result. Harold Russell fought his way back from bleak despair and was selected to play a leading role in "The Best Years of Our Lives." He was a sensational success and won two Academy Awards. He went on lecture tours, wrote books and utilized talents and abilities he never knew he possessed.

I was caught by this line in his story. "It is not what you have lost, but what you have left that counts." Some of us can no longer do some of the things we used to do. Because of the infirmities of age, birth or illness we cannot do some of the exciting activities we read about. I know for sure that I will never scale Mt. Whitney — but I really don't need to.

Whatever your position in life this day, however many times you have been knocked down, "It is not what you have lost, but what you have left that counts." And with the power of the living Christ pulling with you and putting faith into your soul,

you never know what abilities you have and what you can do with what you have left.

So, whatever difficult days life gives you remember that you are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” that there is a miracle in being you. The pitch of your mind can lead to health or illness, so live in the upper level of the mind. What you believe makes your life!

CHAPTER VII



The Reality of Death and the Resurrection

GOD'S ANSWER TO DEATH

On one occasion I was going east on the Santa Fe Chief, in the days when it was one of the great trains. One evening, while we were speeding across Kansas, I heard my name being paged. I was asked to come to a certain car, bedroom C. When I arrived the conductor and porter were there. A woman had been stricken with a heart attack, and the conductor having seen my name thought I was a medical doctor. I went into the room with the thought of giving some comfort and reassurance to the lovely lady, and just as I sat down beside her and took hold of her hand, she died. The porter was stunned and deeply moved. He said, "It is sad to die alone, isn't it?"

But, of all the lonely deaths I am sure that Jesus of Nazareth's stands as unique. During the last week of His life, He was all but deserted, except for His mother and a few faithful friends who stood by helpless.

The fact is on that first Easter there was no sunrise service, and no crowds for the morning worship. There was no thrilling music from a new organ, no robed choirs and not even the "Hallelujah Chorus." There was no mood of excitement or anticipation. Read the story of that day in the Gospels in its stark, unadorned, grim simplicity.

There is a verse in Deuteronomy that reads, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendents may live." This was the challenge to the Hebrews 3,000 years ago, and then 2,000 years ago Christians came to believe that the truth of the Easter event is precisely at that point: "Choose life and not death." The resurrec-

tion experience of Jesus became the towering fact of their existence and brought a new surge of hope and life.

Choose life, but still, we cannot ignore death. The distance and time between birth and death seem so close to one another, and it has been pointed out that the distance from Jesus' birth to His death was only seven miles. Birth and death are words we see alongside one another in the newspaper everyday, and Easter adds another: Resurrection. Of all the words that have been written none has ever equaled in impact and meaning this one: "He is not here; He is risen."

I. DEATH IS REAL

Clearly, of course, the resurrection does not deny the reality of death. The fact that many people do not like to talk about death or attend funerals does not obscure its reality. It confronts us everywhere.

Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, who has distinguished herself in the medical field and specialized in the death experience, shared the comment of a young woman who was dying in a Chicago hospital and was appalled at how casually the staff looked upon death. She said, "I have never died before and it's hard." Dr. Ross points out that there are five stages to dying:

1. Shock reaction — "It can't happen to me."
2. Anger — "Why now, why me?"
3. Bargaining — "God, give me one more chance and I'll be a Christian."
4. A depressive period — a time of inner anguish.
5. Acceptance of reality.

Dr. Ross points out that the tragedy of the modern hospital is, "we do not come to the stage of acceptance as readily as the patients, and we keep people alive artificially long after there is any possible hope for recovery." Death confronts us with a belief and practice, and it is coming in for indepth study from many areas of knowledge. For even existentialists find that

instead of being able to sweep death away, it has become the most vivid symbol of the threat to all that matters. Death is an essential strand in the fabric of life. To think about it is a part of living.

The prince who kept the world in awe,
The judge whose dictate fixed the law;
The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
All levelled; death confounds them all.

Death, then, is not an accident, though it may come accidentally. The basic question is, what do you believe about it? "Choose life and not death," said the ancient writer.

II. MAN AND TOMORROWLAND

Many people feel life isn't worth living here, let alone wanting an afterlife. I recall a cartoon episode where Dagwood told Blondie, "I get up in the morning; I eat my breakfast; I go to work, and so on. I do this year after year." Blondie said, "I have a suggestion, dear. We could have supper in the morning for a change." There is something about life that is so daily.

Still, man has not been content to accept the finality of death. When the chips are down we say with Victor Hugo, "I want all of life that I can get." Man has always said it. In primitive days it was believed that a person didn't die, but got killed, for in the savagery of those times none lived long enough to die of old age. Thus, if one could outwit violence he could live forever. Then came the belief man had some kind of soul which was thought to dwell in various parts of the body: heart, glands, kidney, hair. In the Old Testament story of Samson and Delilah, hair was the vital element. Others believed it to be the blood, that blood was the seat of the personality or soul. This is why the shed blood of Christ received such emphasis in Christianity.

Prior to the time of Jesus it was Socrates who presented a revolutionary idea which is the basis of our conviction today. He said

that the outer world, the material world, is to be interpreted by what is within, by spirit and mind. Up to then man believed that material was the primary substance. Likewise, Plato and Aristotle felt that the soul, or psyche, center of self-consciousness, must be indestructible and thus immortal.

Even the Egyptians believed man had three elements: body, soul and spirit, and in order to be resurrected the body and spirit had to be well preserved, thus the Egyptians specialized in embalming. In the tomb was placed full equipment for the afterlife, ranging from furniture to weapons. Confronted with death they chose life.

But someone says, "That's fine and very primitive, but today we are educated and live under the aura of science. So, we have put away childish beliefs." Science is doing wonderful things and we are staggered by our discoveries in outer space. Little wonder a youngster got confused and sang, "O Beautiful for Space-age Skies."

I remember the first funeral I attended as a boy of 10. I recall nothing about the service, not even the name of the deceased, but one thing the preacher said stayed with me. It is strange how someone will say something at a point in your life, and you never get away from it. He said, "Never let yourself be deceived into believing only what you can see." The person whose interpretation of the world is limited to sense perception is limited, indeed.

A very fascinating book is Dr. Harlow Shapley's "Science Ponders Religion." It makes clear that science today is certainly looking at religion through new eyes. Scientists are telling us you cannot possibly explain this universe without God. The German scientist Rudolph Tischner, the British explorer Sir Hubert Wilkins, the French engineer Rene Warcollier, have affirmed that "there is a spiritual component (a soul) in life, and that it could be demonstrated statistically that there is a nonmaterial element independent of brain cells, nervous sys-

tems and body chemistry." The new science of parapsychology has also proclaimed this fact. A man can be scientific and believe in immortality.

Perhaps it is not so strange that a man should live forever as that he should live at all. Just who are we that we should ever have been born. This is the mystery, and there must be a tomorrow if today is to have meaning.

A woman one day came to the studio of the great English artist, Joseph Turner, and after looking at a painting he had just completed, said, "Mr. Turner, I have never seen a sunrise like that." Turner replied, "No, madame, but don't you wish you had?"

If belief in immortality has been a stumbling block for you, and you haven't been able to see in it what others have seen and are discovering today, my question is, "Don't you wish you had?" Remember how you used to argue logically about love, and then one day you fell in love, and you no longer argued — about love, that is. Sometimes we are like the fellow who said in 50 years marriage he and his wife had only one argument and "it's still going on."

The dream of immortality is a part of the great hopes that make us men, for man has always thought of himself as an unfinished symphony. "I have set before you life and death. . . therefore, choose life."

III. WHAT THE RESURRECTION MEANS

What brings us together as Christians is not a philosophical dissertation on immortality, but the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. I know this is under attack today in theology, to say nothing of the secular world. Dr. Morgan Edwards spoke of the dilemma of a preacher on Easter Sunday. He speaks to many people who hear him only once a year, or on special occasions, and then he talks about a fellow walking away from His own funeral. It seems incredible.

I am not going to indulge in arguments as to whether it was

a physical or spiritual resurrection, but will say as Paul did, in his magnificent resurrection chapter in First Corinthians, "Behold, I show you a mystery." We'd sure like to know more about it. Frequently, you find yourself reading a book and wishing the story would go on from where it leaves off. Frank Stockton's "The Lady or the Tiger" has a tantalizing ending. A youth so bold as to love the King's daughter is condemned to open one of two doors. Behind one is a fascinating girl whom he must marry. Behind the other is a tiger. The King's daughter learns the secret and signals her love to open one of the two doors — but which? The story ends. What a place to leave you, with a beautiful girl and a tiger on your hands! Maybe the author thought that either way he would end up with a tiger!

The Gospel of John ends with this sentence: "There are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written the world could not contain the books." We'd like to know what things, what momentous events followed the resurrection.

Many modern playwrights have struggled with the question of the truth of Easter. One of these is John Masefield who wrote a play called "Good Friday." At the end of the first act the crucifixion of Jesus has been completed. The audience sees a character called "Madman" come on stage. He is speaking with a friend, "Friend, it is over now. The passion, the sweat, the pains. Only the truth remains."

What is truth? The Disciples became as granite inspired to proclaim the resurrection of Christ. Even Thomas the skeptic became triumphant, and men and women who had been defeated by the crucifixion became victorious. It resulted in spiritual rebirth. Every Disciple, except one, went out and died the death of a martyr as a result of a spiritual regeneration that came with the assurance Christ was alive, that death did not have the last word. In the resurrection they got the green light to go

ahead. They saw that evil does not have the last word, that personality is sacred and cannot be destroyed by tyrants or even bullets. Yes, these people were reborn and became new creatures in Christ.

The remarkable transformation that took place in the Disciples is perhaps the strongest argument for the resurrection of Jesus, for why would they have made such a claim had it not been so? They were a dejected, beaten down group of men after the crucifixion and had pretty well accepted the fact, it was over. Then suddenly they became electrified crusaders such as the world had never known. It gave rise to the Christian church and Paul said, "If Christ is not risen from the dead our preaching is in vain." You have to ponder carefully this whole scene, and then you either believe it or you don't. You have to choose either life or death. As for me, I'll choose life!

The world has always wondered what became of Pilate who sentenced Jesus. One story has it that he lived to be an old man, and one day when his hair was white and his step had lost its vibrancy, he asked someone about this strange movement that seemed to be sweeping the empire. Its followers were called Christians. They lived with abandon, without fear and proclaimed a mysterious Gospel of love. Pilate was puzzled by it all. There seemed to be no way to stamp it out. The friend replied a bit hesitantly, "Pilate, do you remember that day long ago when a young man from Galilee stood before you? One Who said His kingdom was not of this world? Remember how the Chief Priests got you in a corner and you finally had Him crucified?"

You see Pilate sitting there, reaching back through the corridors of his yesterdays. He sits motionless for a time, then turns and says, "I don't remember." Imagine a man letting his life become that dulled out. He stood in the presence of greatness, an event that shook the world and didn't remember.

But could that happen to Pilate alone? Think of the promises you have made yourself and this Galilean through your lifetime, or do you have to say with Pilate, "I don't remember."

What a time this is for remembering, for remembering that when you crucify truth on Friday there is a resurrection on Sunday morning; for remembering that when evil has done its worst goodness still has the power to overcome and endure; for remembering that when you stand beside an open grave and bid goodbye to a loved one there is yet "that world not made with human hands, eternal in the heavens." What a day this is for remembering that the men and women of deepest insight have dared to believe that man conquers death; for remembering that we are always overshadowed by that strange man of the cross Who gives us the victory and power over life and death.

So, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live."

WHEN WE DIE — WHAT NEXT?

Joseph died in Egypt at 110, was embalmed and put into a coffin. He was assured before he died that one day he would be buried in his homeland. Then came that day many years later when Pharaoh relented and finally said the children of Israel could leave Egypt. What a day it must have been!

Among the things they took with them you read in the Scriptures, "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for Joseph had solemnly swore the people of Israel, saying, "God will visit you; then you must carry my bones with you from here."

That didn't mean they wrapped a few bones in a copy of the Alexandria Times and lugged them along. It included the back-breaking casket and all — a coffin suspended on poles and requiring possibly a dozen men to carry it. For many years in the wilderness Joseph was carried along, until you read in Joshua, "The bones of Joseph which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt were buried at Schechem, in a portion of ground which Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of money." The people kept faith with a great tradition and a distinguished leader.

It has been said that you can tell something of the character of a nation by the people it honors and the holidays it observes. In the Old Testament you read these lines, "If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand lose its cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I cease to make Jerusalem my chief joy." One can imagine this was a ritual of the old prophet to keep alive the sacred heritage that came to him out of Jeru-

saalem. It was this gift of remembrance that continually inspired the Israelites to break the bonds of captivity in Babylon in order that the Holy City might be rebuilt.

It is a wonderful thing to remember in a time when it is so easy to forget. Our country observes many significant holidays, but none exceeds, in its emotional texture, Memorial Day. It is an observance that grew out of the Civil War. In the south the Gray Ladies of the Confederacy took a day in May to place flowers of remembrance on the graves of those who had died. Then they began to also decorate the graves of the northern soldiers buried there and gradually this became a national custom. Today we honor the military and civilian heroes of our nation and our own loved ones as well.

Most of us live as if our time were to last forever. Death is for the other person, never for us. It is said there are two things man cannot face: the sun and his own death. No one of us can conceive of himself as being nonexistent. Freud said that to us our own death is "unimaginable."

Still, we live in a day that confronts us not only with our own death, but the possibility of the death of history itself from nuclear fission. The study of it is known as thanatology, and death is coming in for much research today. I want to share with you something of where we are in ideas and thought about this strange mystery that awaits each of us.

Your response to a grief situation cannot be divorced from your attitude toward your own eventual death. Shakespeare, Greek mythologists and Old Testament writers have encouraged us to create a philosophy of life that looks realistically at death itself.

I. THE FACT OF IMMORTALITY

As much as we regret death, think what the world would be like if no one ever died. Our hearts may yearn for this, but logic rejects it. Our world would be overpopulated with ancient

people to say nothing of the endless suffering this would entail. Death is a step in the progress of the soul, and in Christian context we accept the reality of survival. It was Emmanuel Kant who said that "justice demands a future life."

In the famous Glyptotek Gallery in Copenhagen is one of the most unusual bits of statuary in all Europe. Titled, "The First Death," it represents Adam and Eve and the dead boy Abel. For the first time in their lives they look upon death. As the cold, lifeless body of the lad lies in his mother's arms, the fact breaks upon the consciousness of the parents that this wonderful experience we call life does not endure forever on this earth. In the face of the mother, as she gazes at the lifeless boy, is an expression of unutterable grief. In the look of the father, as he stares off into space, is the reflection of a man making a desperate effort to understand.

As you move along through the centuries resurrection seems to have been a divine gift bestowed upon martyrs — the resurrection only of the good, and this involved the resurrection of the body. There is no such thing as the New Testament doctrine of death, for it does not discuss death as a theme, but rather it is treated in a variety of settings. But, it can be said that resurrection is the dominant note of the New Testament.

I think that what is remarkable is that in all religions and cultures there has been a belief that something within man endures. Schubert, dying at 31, left his "Unfinished Symphony," and the Christian faith has always seen life as an unfinished symphony.

Some years ago in Correge County, France, a prehistoric man was found buried. Scientists estimated that he may have lain there 250,000 years. One arm was bent in support of his head which rested on a pillow of flints, while the other reached out to grasp the weapon at his side — a stone. He had gone out of this life armed for the next one.

Every basic need and instinct of man finds an answer in the universe. When we are thirsty water quenches thirst. Food is the answer to hunger. The need to be wanted is met by love. Surely the desire to live again is not the only instinct that ends in nothingness.

Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, widely known theologian and psychologist, says, "I see no reason to suppose that man's consciousness, though it uses a brain, dies with that brain any more than a man who is a violinist and expresses himself through his violin ceases to be a musician if you smash his violin. He simply picks up another instrument."

So, whether you talk about breath-soul, unit of vital power, resurrection of the body, the continuing of consciousness of life, the signposts of the centuries point to man's surviving the experience of death.

Presuming this is true, what will be the nature of that new existence?

II. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

Anyone who would undertake to speak dogmatically in this area would, of course, be foolish indeed. For we are in an area of speculation. The nice thing is — you cannot disprove what I am going to say, but neither can I give you test tube proof. There is much research going on in parapsychology laboratories in major universities. This area of science has to do with that which is beyond the known basic laws of sense perception and experience: mental telepathy, precognition (experiencing something before it actually happens, generally in a dream or trance), retrocognition (the feeling or experience of having been someplace before), psychokinesis (the use of psychical force to influence physical objects). These have become legitimate areas of study, and you can now take a doctor's degree in parapsychology in universities having such a department.

I believe that this can be definitely stated: there are strange

things and experiences that happen to people that cannot be explained by logic and reason as we know it. There is a dimension to some minds that we cannot fully understand. It is called extrasensory perception. We even hear of people who claim to have lived before.

The old idea of reincarnation is being seriously explored today. It is an idea that has been a belief in oriental religions since the 6th Century B.C., but the western mind has dismissed it as ridiculous. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead makes a case for this among the Disciples. When Jesus asked them, "Who do men say the Son of Man is?" The response was, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah..." Interestingly enough, Jesus did not tell them they were talking nonsense. It was a popular belief then that John the Baptist was a reincarnation of Elijah.

The man who has examined this idea most carefully is Dr. Ian Stevenson, a prominent psychiatrist, who received his medical education at McGill University. He became chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Neurology at the University of Virginia School of Medicine, and he has examined scientifically 44 cases of reported reincarnation.

The first recorded American case he studied was published in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat in 1892. Isaac Foster, of Illinois, had lost an adolescent daughter named Maria, before he and his family moved to the Dakotas. There, another daughter named Nellie was born who persisted in calling herself Maria. Foster had occasion to return to Illinois on business and took Maria along, then an adolescent. She recognized not only Foster's old house, but many people she had never seen before, but whom her sister Maria had known well. She accurately described Maria's school, a mile from the house, located it, went to Maria's old desk and said, "This is my desk." What Dr. Stevenson has observed is that a persistent pattern is seen in cases where

a child is born quickly into a bereaved family, who claims to be the dead "sibling and has clear memories of the other's life."

I am not making a case for or against reincarnation, but simply saying some learned men are discovering some interesting things, and restudying a doctrine that was a part of Christian theology until 533 A.D. Dr. Weatherhead says, "Our preparation for heaven may be that we have to come back to earth in another human body and try again." Who knows? Or, as Dr. C. S. Lewis put it, "I believe that if a million chances were likely to do good, they would be given."

So, out of the broad spectrum of research of the life to come, what are we being told today from various sources?

1. Life continues immediately: It has been declared that with man there is a soul, a psyche, a spirit, a mind — or whatever you choose to call it, that is not limited by time or space or death. There is something within us that endures. We find this to be true here and now, for we "die" a number of times while we live. Every seven years we are entirely different persons, says the physiologist. Everything about us changes — nerves, tissue, muscle, blood cells. If we live to be 70 we have been 10 different persons, always dying, while at the same time being born into a new stage of life. Through this process of dying and living it is memory that makes of us persons, for if you didn't know who you were yesterday you wouldn't know who you are today.

Thus it is said that life moves on from the point where we leave it here. When one dies suddenly it may take a little time for him to realize he has experienced what we call "death."

2. We move from an obstructed to an unobstructed universe: Life here continually meets with obstructions. If I try to move through a solid object, I am blocked by it. In the life to come, I would move through the object. There is a change that takes place though recognition continues. You see this in

Jesus following the resurrection. At first the Disciples did not recognize Him, such as those walking with Him along the road to Emmaus. Then you remember Jesus did something that He didn't do before His death: He walked through a closed door into the Upper Room. He was visible, yet He was different.

3. We die only once: We can die only once, and then we do not really die. Someone says, "You are sick, and then all of a sudden you're well." It is suggested there are various stages of development, and that there may be "schools" where we continue the learning process. There are responsibilities to be fulfilled. A fundamental law of life is growth and the growth process would logically continue in that world of eternal values. Truth, love, justice and righteousness are the values that endure and govern life here and there. So, there is no dying, really. In death you are suddenly free from body limitations.

4. Heaven is not a fixed point: The consensus is that heaven is not necessarily one fixed point in the universe, a place where you do nothing but rest and relax for eternity, and reap your rewards. Of course, we are "place" oriented. Our memories are meaningful because they are associated with places.

Some years ago I visited the old Minnesota farm where I spent some boyhood days. It is now a game preserve area. But, I located the old pump handle above the well — now almost lost in the brush. Instantly, it resurrected memories and I could see everything in its place.

There is no language to convey to us a true and accurate picture of what life on the other side is like, but it would seem that there are beautiful things to be seen and experienced. Heaven may be many places, "many mansions," as suggested in John's Gospel. It may involve many differing levels of activity and development. Reincarnation could be one of these — that we have to achieve a certain level of spiritual development before we can move on to a higher plane of existence, thus for

some persons life may have to be relived here. It is not an impossible thought.

Time and space will mean nothing. If you want to go someplace, such as make a trip to Berlin, you think it and you are there. This sounds fantastic, but look at what we are doing to time and space here. Contrast coming over the plains in a covered wagon with a trip east on a 747 jet. One researcher is seriously working on stepping this up. If you want to go to Paris you will step into a booth, push the Paris button, disintegrate and reassemble three minutes later in a booth in Paris. The major danger is your head may go to London, your torso to Berlin and your feet to Rome! This will be the grand tour! Incredible? Yes! But in the future — who can answer that?

5. There will be a reunion with loved ones: Dr. Paul Tillich talked about “the conscious self in eternal life.” No concept of life has any meaning apart from conscious existence, and the power of recall — the recognition of friends and loved ones. Maybe death is a bit like a ship leaving port. You cry, “There she goes!” But a few days later on another dock someone cries, “Here she comes!” Thus, in the agonizing moment when we let go of someone we love, perhaps someone on that other “dock” eternal in the heavens takes hold of the hand and says, “Here she comes!”

What an exciting thing it would be to see some of the great persons of history about whom we have read. I’d like to have a chat with John Wesley, Methodism’s founder. Think what it would mean to see Christ in person. At least we can dream of this.

Certainly, some of what I have been saying is “way out” in the traditional sense, but we are living in a time that is thinking broader in many areas of experience. Whether you agree with any of what has been said isn’t the important thing. What is

significant is that you and I be acquainted with the directions of human thought today — even as it relates to death.

Whatever happens at the death line, I am sure of this: We can trust God to do what is right by human life, and that Jesus, Who overcame His own death, was right when He said, "Because I live ye, too, shall live!" This conviction is the heart of our faith, for as Paul put it, "If Christ is not risen from the dead, then our preaching is in vain." If we deeply dare to believe that through Him we achieve victory over death, then we see death not as something to be feared, but as a wonder yet to be lived.

CHAPTER VIII



Forty-Three Years in the Ministry

HOW THE YEARS HAVE CHANGED MY MIND

Someone has said, "We are the sum total of every experience through which we have lived." There is an element of truth here, but I think you would have to add to that thought heredity, belief and attitude, unless you use experience in an all encompassing sense. To be sure, all of us have been conditioned by the events through which we have lived, and let your mind quickly recall the cataclysmic avenues of history down which we have walked for the past 10, 20, or 30 years and you see this.

My ministry, my attitudes, my theology have been conditioned by all that has rubbed against my mind, whether war, peace, revolution, crisis, friendship, the church and so on. So, in a very real way we are, indeed, "the sum total of every experience through which we have lived." I think I would have to say that I am less dogmatic and less judgmental than when I graduated from seminary. Then I thought I had the answer to every human problem. Today I am much less sure of that. You remember that when he was 16 years of age Mark Twain was sure his father didn't know anything, but when he was 21 he was amazed at how much his dad had learned in five years.

I would like to address three areas where my mind has changed and my convictions deepened through the years. You may or may not agree with some of what I say, but the important thing is that we see our Christian faith as a growing faith and have an innerwillingness to stretch our minds.

I. SIN HAS DEEPER IMPLICATIONS THAN I THOUGHT

One may not like the word sin, but it is very real. For whenever a person seeks to do good he encounters a struggle with evil. The Apostle Paul spoke of this. There is no escape from the

conflict between the good and the bad, the right and the wrong. The greatest battlefield of the world is within you and me.

Theologically, a distinction is made between evil and sin, though not all theologians would concur in the way I put it. Evil is unconscious wrong-doing, the wrong that we unknowingly do, the false choice we made as mistaken good men and women. Thus, we are all a part of the evil of the world as so dramatically portrayed in the cross experience of Jesus. Rembrandt put himself in his great painting of the Crucifixion for he believed he would have been among those who participated in the crucifixion. So with us. Jesus was killed by mistaken good men, men who thought they were doing good when it was evil.

Sin is conscious wrong-doing, the deliberate choice of the wrong when we know the right. I was raised in a very conservative, literalistic theology with its emphasis upon heaven and hell, sin and salvation, repentance or condemnation, eternal punishment or everlasting bliss. It made it very easy to distinguish the saints from the sinners, and those who talked about "the saved" usually included themselves among them. My years in the ministry have taught me that you cannot divide people this simply, that there is evil in the best of us and good in the worst of us.

I recall a conversation I had with Grant Cooper, the attorney who defended Sirhan Sirhan, the young man who assassinated Robert Kennedy. I asked what stood out in his mind concerning the trial. Grant said when he learned of the assassination he was angry, like the rest of us, and felt like killing Sirhan himself. He had not expected at that time to be the defense attorney. He said that as the trial went on he came to know Sirhan Sirhan and made the discovery that he had in so many other difficult cases — that there is some good in the worst of men and some bad in the best among us. This discovery in the ministry has made me much less judgmental of people.

Jesus said, "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged." This is to say that every time we pronounce a judgment on someone or something we ourselves are being judged. For we are revealing whether we are persons of good judgement. So, be careful about judging individuals. A person may have much deeper spiritual convictions and commitments than you or I have, but he doesn't run around talking about being "saved."

My early training associated sin with things: card playing, theatre-going and dancing. I remember when it was considered a sin to show movies in church, though it was okay to show slides. The distinction was never quite clear. I recall the little elderly lady who wouldn't eat ice cream because "anything that good can't be right."

We smile at this because it makes sin too narrow. Study Jesus and you see that we lay stress at the wrong point. Turn to the Parable which speaks of two men going into the Temple to pray. You wouldn't expect to find a man sinning while at prayer, but that is exactly what happened. The Pharisee was judged a sinner because his attitudes were wrong. Jesus saw the heart of sin as being, not with things, but with wrong attitudes.

So, a deck of cards cannot sin; only people can. The sin is not in the cards but in the use one makes of them. You can use your car for an errand of mercy or kill someone with it. The sin is not in the car, but the use to which we put it. Sin is the choice of a lesser value when we know a higher one. This means that whatever defiles the mind or body, whatever makes one less than God intended him to be is sin. This is something that touches life more deeply than I thought when I entered the ministry. We are continually in need of redemption.

II. MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE HAS EXPANDED

I was raised with the typical sectarian view of the Bible, a narrow literalism that substituted the printed page for the word, and there is a difference. I have come to a deepening convic-

tion that one of the real needs of the church is for people to acquire an intelligent understanding of the Bible, in this day when there is so much Biblical "crackpotism." All one has to do to get a following is to squeeze Russia out of the Book of Revelation or Daniel, announce a date for the end of the world and set up a tent. A young lady was asked if her boyfriend had kissed her. She replied, "No, but he's steamed up my glasses twice." There are many people steamed up about these being the last days with the end of things about to come. The deeper I go into the historical study of the Scriptures the more I am convinced that the sects are off-center in their often harsh, rigid interpretations derived from a proof-text approach to Biblical study.

The Bible was written on two continents, in three languages by an unknown number of authors. The events do not all appear in chronological order. The two creation stories in Genesis come from entirely different periods of history. The Bible is not a Book of Science, but a Book of Life. The story of the Prodigal Son is not true because it is in the Bible, but is in the Bible because it is the true experience of millions of people in every generation. Paul wrote his letters, not to set hard and rigid rules of behavior for eternity, but to deal with specific problems in the churches he established and to proclaim the fact of Christ's resurrection. He never expected those letters to become Scripture.

The Bible is the story of man's unfolding experience with God. In the beginning He is a superman who dwells in the mountain, hurling thunderbolts. Then you move through a thousand years of history and Amos sees God as justice, Isaiah as righteousness, Hosea as love, Job as a God who endures with us through our suffering, Jonah as a God of the universe, Jesus as a God of righteous love reconciling man unto himself. You cannot live by the ethic of Moses and the ethic of Jesus at the same time, for a thousand years separate the two men in their

understanding of God. We need to see this and for this reason. I would suggest that one purchase a good commentary such as the one volume edition of the Interpreter's Bible or the Abingdon Bible Commentary. Acquire an intelligent understanding of the Bible, of Jesus and His teachings, or the social and historical background out of which they were born, and it will save you from being distressed by all the nonsense being put out today in the name of religion. Then you can make the Bible a companion and source of inspiration, rather than worry about whether you can prove your point with a Scripture text.

III. MY EMPHASIS IN PREACHING HAS CHANGED

When I began my ministry it was with the expectation that the primary function of the preacher was to save people from sin, and redeem social order. But, as I have indicated, I soon found the problem of sin was not as simple as I thought. Today, we confront a broad spectrum of gray area which it is difficult to clearly distinguish between right and wrong. I discovered that the social gospel must proclaim the right of freedom and justice for persons in every walk of life.

Today, I see a basic function of preaching as that of saving people from themselves, from their littleness, pettiness, rottenness, inner debauchery, and to save them to something — to higher values, the life abundant, to Christ-likeness.

I seek to put into preaching a practical element, a handle to take hold of. For the problems that confront me from week to week as I see them in the lives of others are: sorrow, despair, self-defeat, immorality, fear, marital tensions, problems between parents and children, and loneliness. A sermon must present a Christ who can help, save us and give us some new starting points for meaningful living.

A primary change that has taken place in my preaching during recent years is a renewed emphasis upon the commitment of life — commitment to Christ. So many people today are unwilling to commit themselves to anything but a new refriger-

ator or car, but if ever our world is to be Christian it will call for Christ-centered people.

I would have to say that my greatest discovery of the years has been a personal realization that what I preach about on a Sunday morning is really real. It works! It is one thing to talk about the glory of water. It is something else to swim in it. It is one thing to proclaim the splendor of Yosemite, but it is something else to experience it for yourself. You recall the reporter who asked the old fellow who discovered Yosemite to share his first impressions of it. He replied, "Had I knowed it was going to be so famous I'd a looked at it." One can talk about God and praise His holy name, but to experience Him — ah, that is quite different.

The lowest point of my life was Good Friday in 1953. I had been in the hospital for six weeks following a heart attack with no end in sight and was to miss my first Easter Sunday in the pulpit. I had the gnawing feeling that possibly I was through, that I would never preach again because of a lame heart.

I listened with inner agony to the dramatic portrayal of "The Terrible Meek" over the radio — with agony because I felt myself on the cross that night. I had been given a dose of digi-toxin for the purpose of shocking my heart back into rhythm, and it had the effect of "tearing up" my whole system from my toes to the top of my head. Every nerve and muscle ached. I lay there for several hours after midnight suffering inwardly and physically in a way I had never known. Suddenly, there came an overpowering sense of a presence in the room of One greater than myself. It was a strange yet wonderful sensation and there are no words to describe it. And then I heard these words as clearly spoken as any that have ever stabbed my mind, "You're going to be alright. Let go and let God." I have used this latter phrase a thousand times since. Possibly they came from my subconscious mind. I do not know, except that I heard them and they were real.

From that moment I knew I was going to get well and preach again. Somehow I did manage to let go and let God, and the recovery process set in quickly — so much so that some days later my esteemed heart doctor, Dr. Ray Sands, said, “This is a miracle!”

So, I offer no apology for my faith. I no longer piddle around on the fence of indecision as to whether God is real. For me HE IS. The Christian faith works. In my ministry I fall short of the glory of God, but that glory never dims out.

I recall a great line from the motion picture “David and Bathsheba.” A great drought had come upon the land and was attributed to David’s sin. Then came the moment when he went into the Holy of Holies to ask God’s forgiveness. As the rain once again began to fall gently upon the multitude outside, and as David made his exit from the Temple, Nathan, the prophet, cried aloud, “No man can ever expect to discover the Nature of God, but He gives us a glimpse of His face.” There are those deep hours of life when He does and our faith is deepened and life itself transformed.

My mind has changed in many other ways, but these three things stand out: Sin has a deeper implication than I ever thought possible; my understanding of the Bible has expanded; the emphasis of my preaching has changed. So, perhaps the writer was closer to the truth than we may have thought in saying that, “We are the sum total of every experience through which we have lived.” If so, what has it done for your life and faith?

CHAPTER IX



Where To, Please?

WHERE TO, PLEASE?

When I was a member of the National United Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief, I used to ride the 20th Century Limited between Chicago and New York. It was one for which they rolled out the red carpet as you made your way to the train. Always a brakeman or porter stood at the entrance to each car and asked every boarding traveler, "Where to, please?" This was to assure your getting the right car, for some were switched off at Pittsburgh or Cleveland. A woman in front of me, on one occasion, responded to the question, "Where to, please?" with the word, "Anyplace!" She was on her way but she didn't care where.

So many people are like that. They're on the go, but don't know where to. And this is understandable in a society that pulls us in all directions and bottles us up on the inside.

There is a unique character in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* named "Mr. Facing-Both-Ways." You don't have to look far to locate his modern counterpart, for so many individuals touch life only at its superficial ends.

A little boy was asked, "What does your watch say?" He responded, "It doesn't say anything. You have to look at it." Life is like that. There come those moments when we need to take a good look at where we are and where we are headed.

Graham Greene wrote a dramatic parable titled "Burnt-Out-Case," the story of an architect who rose to the heights of fame only to find his feelings and aspirations were dead. He went to Africa and found some Dominican Fathers ministering to lepers. Most of them had no arms and moved about on stumps for feet, but there was no pain. Greene saw them as burnt-out

cases and then came to a realization that this was a description of himself. His emotions were gone and his self-confidence zero. There are people who never get fired up and feel no enthusiasm for anything.

A youngster was asked by Art Linkletter on his "House Party" show what he wants to be when he grows up. His reply was "Alive!" That's what we all want to be.

Where to, please? How would you answer that in relation to yourself?

A mother asked her son what he learned in Sunday school. He related the dramatic story of Moses and the Israelites being backed up against the Red Sea. Then he told how the United States Air Force and Marines came in and wiped out the Egyptians. The mother took the lad to task for his wild imagination and he said, "But if I told it the way the teacher did you wouldn't believe it." Let me tell it as it is and see if I can underscore several basic things that give direction to life in a way you will believe it.

I. A NEW KIND OF OPENNESS

What Jesus primarily did through His teachings was to lead us into a journey of the self. He opened doors to the innerlife so that we might discover the uniqueness within us. The fact no two of us are alike is perhaps the most astounding fact of history. Carlyle suggested there is a path that each of us must find for the self, and then walk that path, but there came One to the world 2,000 years ago who can help us find that path.

The Sermon on the Mount closes with a dramatic word, "When Jesus finished these words the crowds were astonished at the power behind His teaching. For His words had the ring of authority..." When you search out the source of Christ's power and authority, I think one would have to say it was rooted in authenticity. He was an authentic person.

What does that mean? A dictionary definition says that to

be authentic is to be substantial, true and courageous. To be authentic is to be a real person.

Truth is not easy to come by. Many centuries ago Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Someone tells of a lion who asked a leopard, "Who is king of the jungle?" The leopard replied, "You are." The lion asked the same question of the tiger and the answer was the same, "You are." Then he made the inquiry of an elephant. The elephant wrapped his trunk around the lion, bashed him against a tree and threw him into the river. Dazed, the lion crawled out and said, "You didn't have to be so rough just because you didn't know the answer." We wish there was a simple answer to truth.

I talked one night with a young man suspected of robbery — stealing a car. He gave me the run around and I said, "Why don't you tell the truth?" He sneered, "The truth means nothing to me." But it better or he will wind up as an anyplace person.

A psychologist friend says that every person needs a safe place within himself that has the ring of truth. It is not possible to be a whole person and live with deceit and lies. Truth springs from an innerself that is authentic, real and it sets one free inside. You instinctively know whether you are on good living terms with truth as you understand it, and whether your word is as good as your bond. Where to, please? Are you moving in the direction of being a real, authentic person?

Courage likewise springs from something deep within that enables us to take life as it is. Remember "life is lived according to the altitude of one's attitude," and it takes an exceedingly high mental altitude to live with courage today. The Scripture says, "And Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem." My, what courage that took with a cross looming on the horizon.

The representative of a steel company made an interesting comment as we were seated at a speaker's table one day. He said, "Your business is a lot like mine. I make steel for people and you put steel into people." I would like to think that is so.

All of us face discouraging moments. I often think of that night when I was preaching in El Centro and a fly kept buzzing around my head. That's terribly distracting for you never know what it has in mind. Suddenly it disappeared, much to my relief. But apparently he went to the back of the sanctuary to renew his energy, and came zooming across the room just as I opened my mouth, and down he went. All I could think of to say was, "He was a stranger and I took him in." Things don't always go right even for ministers!

I read the story recently of Ike Skelton who, at 12 years of age, was stricken with polio, which left his arms dangling helplessly. He entered Wentworth Academy and wanted to make the military school's track team. He was told he needed his arms as much as his legs to run. Well, he continued to run but couldn't make the grade competitively.

Then came the last track meet of the year with their arch rival Kemper. Ike begged for a chance in the two mile run. The coach gave in, fastened his arms to his side so they wouldn't get in the way. Every eye was on him, and the students swarmed on to the field to lift him to their shoulders. Had Ike won the race? No, he came in last. But, he came in! It was the most important race of his life for he proved that even polio could not defeat or discourage his spirit. Ike became an exchange student and today is a successful lawyer.

One translation of the New Testament has Peter say, "Brace up your minds. Keep cool. It is unbelievable, this power of human spirit to overcome, to brace itself for the unexpected turns of life and go forward with courage."

I well recall a morning when we sailed past the Rock of Gibraltar. It made you want to reach out and get a piece of the rock. Africa was on one side, Spain on the other and the Atlantic straight on. I asked the captain how the weather looked ahead. He replied, "We are heading into a storm." I hoped this meant

we would go round the edge of it but he said we would go right through the center of it, and then added, "But it will be for only 150 miles and then the weather will be beautiful on the other side. Besides, we have a ship that can ride it out." So with us. Each of us has some stormy days ahead, but courage is the power to ride them out, and God puts the steel in our lives to enable us to do this. But it takes a real, authentic person to do this.

II. A NEW KIND OF GENUINENESS

When I committed my life to the ministry I did not have an earth-shattering experience. I didn't speak in tongues or roll all over the floor, but I did feel a new sense of direction. When someone asked, "Where to, please?" I knew where I was going. I had a new innermotivation and someone greater than myself to guide me. This strange man of the cross became my inner advisor, and it gave me a centerpoint deep within that had the ring of truth.

Paul Tillich said that when that happens you have the feeling of being accepted. No longer is your basic motivation the struggle for power and prestige, as with a Hitler. Nietzsche put it this way, "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how." This is right: once you settle the why of your life you discover some purpose to it.

A short time ago I was re-reading the life of Jesus and I was struck by the variety of people with whom he associated: tax collectors, lepers, the blind, a rich young ruler, members of the Sanhedrin, a woman caught in adultery — people from the top to the bottom of the social scale. He related to the broad spectrum of society. What stood out in my mind was that the Man of Nazareth was not despoiled by any relationship because He was genuine. He spoke as one having authority.

This impressed me because through my many years in the ministry I have seen much phony religion. I am indebted, to

be sure, to the great host of magnificent Christian laymen I have known who have enriched my life. But, I have likewise endured so many self-righteous, judgmental, holier-than-thou Christians whose self-placed halos have had a ring of phoniness, individuals who mean one thing and say something else. It is said there is some point at which we are all vulnerable, and all of us fall short of the glory of God, and I know that were it not for a sense of God's forgiveness there have been times when I could not have stood myself. Not so with Jesus. He was authentic and genuine.

A reason I accepted the invitation to be a Chaplain for the Glendale Police Department was to put myself to the test, to satisfy myself that there was nothing phony about my ministry. Even preachers clothe themselves in holier-than-thou attitudes and are insensitive to the wounds they create in their human relationships.

I wondered how well I could take it in confronting people who had no regard for clergymen, whether my Christianity would go down the drain when I was called a pig, or cursed out. I have been dealt with roughly at times and have heard language I never learned in seminary.

In an emergency room one night a severely injured woman was hospitalized. I told her I was a Chaplain and she snarled, "I hate ministers. Get out of here." I continued to hold her hand as the doctor did the stitching and talked quietly. When it was over the lady looked at me and said, "I didn't know a minister could be so human." What she was saying was that she saw something more than a religious stance, but a mark of genuineness, a human being who was concerned for her. This has happened many times. Some people have been violent in their attitudes toward me and then began to sense something more than their traditional image of a clergyman. I do not say this to exalt myself, but to say my faith has had some hard testing in

confrontations with thieves, the irreligious, tragedies, accident situations, with the lonely, and those who have been hurt by life.

Out of this experience I can say the Christian faith works. What I have talked about in pulpits across America through these years is true and stands the test in the toughest days.

I received a letter from a scientist who had written a book about his discoveries. He said, "I have found that the natural laws and principles scientifically established are in complete agreement with the basic teachings of Jesus..." Indeed, He was authentic, real and genuine and what He taught squares with the nature of things as they are.

One night we had a police call with dramatic impact. A woman called the station and said her husband had gone berserk, had kicked out the apartment windows and cried, "Now he's coming for me." We got there fast, rushed into the apartment and the man had his wife down on the floor with a butcher knife against her jugular vein. The officer pulled his gun and said, "One move of that knife and you're dead." There was that interminable pause when you wondered what would happen. Suddenly he threw the knife aside and got up. Then he said an interesting thing to me, "I couldn't have done it anyway, because I saw the cross on your collar."

I don't know what memories the cross resurrected in his mind, but in that terrible moment his wife was saved by the cross. It has been so countless times across the years. There is a strange, transforming power in that cross for it symbolizes one who was authentic and genuine, and who everlastingly calls to us to come up a little higher and be more God-like in all we do.

I leave you with the question with which we started, "Where to, please?" In what direction is your life moving? You well remember that ancient proverb, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

About Kenny Carlson

- *Born in Winnipeg, Canada on Christmas Eve (an identical twin)

- *Graduated from University of Southern California, received a Master of Divinity Degree from Garrett Theological Seminary, was presented a Doctorate Degree from the University of the Pacific

- *Studied to be a concert pianist, but was involved in an auto accident which altered his career

- *Minister of Youth under Dr. Roy L. Smith at First Methodist Church, Los Angeles (1933-37). During that time he traveled 8,000 miles as a 'hobo' making a survey of transient youth problems

- *Was special lecturer for the Southern Pacific Railway throughout the mid-western states while in Seminary and served as Minister of the First Methodist Church, Lake Forest, Illinois (1937-40)

- *Began full-time preaching ministry at Central Methodist Church, Glendale (1940)

- *Minister of First Methodist Church, El Centro (1945-48). While there was radio minister for Mutual and ABC Network Stations in the Imperial Valley. His show titled, "Kenny Carlson's Fireside Philosophies" merited the largest listening audience in that area

- *Appointed to First Methodist Church, Santa Monica (1948-1960). Built new sanctuary, chapel, educational and office facilities

- *Appointed Senior Minister of First United Methodist Church in Glendale in 1960. Built new \$1,600,000 sanctuary and fellowship center. Served the congregation 17 years

- *Awards and Honors include:

 - Los Angeles Police Department Distinguished Service Award

 - Kiwanis Certificate of Merit

 - Red Cross Distinguished Community Service Award

 - Honorary Member, California Congress PTA

 - Glendale Bar Association Liberty Bell Award

 - Glendale Police Department Chaplain

Four Freedom Foundation's George Washington Gold Medal Awards
for outstanding sermons

Third Annual Masonic Americanism Award

Glendale Chamber of Commerce Golden Service Award

Member of International Speakers' Association

Chaplain for Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons for California
and Hawaii

Chaplain of Los Angeles Scottish Rite Bodies

*Heard on the radio for 30 consecutive years

*Appeared in a television commercial for Glendale Federal Savings and
Loan Association in his role as Police Chaplain

*Hobbies included collecting model trains, epitaphs, old newspapers,
playing the piano, and swimming

*Served as minister at large for the United Methodist Church and public
speaker for Glendale Federal Savings

*The Los Angeles Times said, "He is a living legend among connoisseurs
of the art of profound preaching." They also named him as one of "the
pick of the preachers. . . Southland sermonizers with something special."

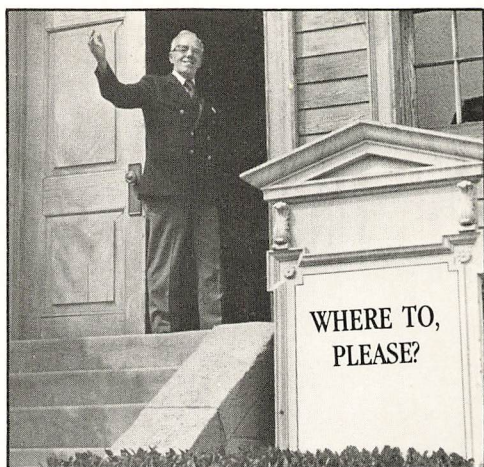
*Married Rose at First Methodist Church in Los Angeles on September 5,
1937 — celebrated the births of Marsha in 1944, Wes in 1948 and Rick in
1952 — and grandchildren Sarah Marie in 1974 and Scott Donald in 1978

DR.
KENNETH
A.
CARLSON

LIVING TO BEAT HELL

Living
TO BEAT
HELL

DR. KENNETH A. CARLSON



of us, but here you read his words of courage as he continues to reach out and help us to get going again and again. This is a book that will show you in detail how to "let go and let God" and how "we might have life and have it abundantly."

For 10 years it was my joy, privilege and honor to serve as Kenny's lay leader at the First United Methodist Church of Glendale, California. We were privileged to share a very deep and wonderful friendship through the years. There are so many words I could and would want to say about this man, but if I could only choose one it would be **COMMUNICATOR PAR EXCELLENCE**. Whether speaking before 5,000 or 3 people, he was able to communicate the meaning of living through the principles of Christianity. You are indeed lucky to have this special book. You are in for a **GROW-ING** experience as you read. Let it happen – learn from its wisdom, gentle humor and inspiring faith.

Your life will be joyously enriched because Dr. Kenneth A. Carlson will have touched your life, whether it be for the first time or for the one hundredth time. His commitment to help others continues to live on through his words.

I'm glad you walked among us, my friend!